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TEMPLE BAR 2468 DECEMBER 15, 1956 VOLUME 100 NUMBER 2633

IN THIS ISSUE

Stories

SON OF THE VELD *by Stuart Cloete* 18
JUNGLE AMBUSH *by Edward Lindall* 24

Articles

CAN WE STEAL THE SUN'S KEY TO POWER? *by Dr. J. Bronowski* 12
SHOWMANSHIP PACKS THE HOUSE *by Don Everitt* 22

Serials

SAPPHIRES ON WEDNESDAY (Part 1) *by Malcolm Gair* 9
THE SMALL WOMAN (Part 2) *by Alan Burgess* 15
NO NAME ON THE DOOR (Part 4) *by A. H. Williams* 26

Features

FREE SPEECH: 4, 6. THE COVER: 6. JOKES: 28, 32, 35, 37, 38, 45. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME: 30. HUSBANDS: 34, 36, 39, 44. WINDFALLS: 41. MY SISTER PAT: 43. OPEN TO VIEW: 46.

REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Dr. Bronowski vowed to promote atoms for peace

ONE fine spring morning in 1932 a young Cambridge student, researching mathematics, burst into an informal tea party given by his professor and announced: "I've just seen John Cockcroft. He says we've smashed the atom."

The student was Jacob Bronowski. "For me," he says now, "Cockcroft's news was a revelation. This was how I, an abstract mathematician, first became aware that the experimental sciences were bubbling and hissing with change."

Years later, as a member of a scientific team, Bronowski stood in the rubble of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and was shocked into a greater awareness of the destructive potential of atomic power. He had helped to plan the strategic bombing of Germany, and had seen its effects; he had planned the destruction of targets in the Pacific. But what he saw in Japan appalled him.

"I resolved then that I would have nothing further to do with atomic power used in this way," he says. The article which begins on page 12 is one result of that vow: an attempt to explain how atomic power can be used to produce an age of prosperity.

When he returned from Japan in 1946 he startled 30 million listeners with a broadcast "Journey to Japan," which was based on the team's report, and planned deliberately to coincide with atom bomb tests at Bikini. He has been a forceful radio and television personality ever since.

Bronowski was brought to Britain at the age of twelve by his father, a Polish merchant. He mastered English in two years. Today, at forty-eight, he is married with four daughters, and lives in a square modern house in the Cotswolds. At Cheltenham he directs the National Coal Board's research. "One thing is certain," he says. "You can't blow anybody up with coal."

JUST three hundred years ago, Stephen Cloete became the first white man to be given a grant of land in South Africa. Today one of his direct descendants, Stuart Cloete, is proud to recall his kinship with this old pioneer, who was later murdered by Hottentots. Many generations of Cloetes have now lived and worked with distinction in South Africa. "Africa is in my blood," says Stuart Cloete, whose story on page 18 is set in the Transvaal veld where he farmed on a 32,000 acre ranch for ten years.

Yet it was in Europe that Cloete spent the early part of his life. He was born in Paris and educated in Britain. On the outbreak of the first World War he joined the army at seventeen. He was twice wounded and, after a spell of regular soldiering with the Coldstream Guards, he retired from the army in 1925.

The ten years on the Transvaal were the nearest Cloete has ever got to settling down. His travels have taken him through Africa and Europe. "I've never spent more than five years in the same place since those Transvaal days, and I don't propose to."

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Free Speech

- **Do gadgets make women unhappy?**
- **The world at Shakespeare's door**
- **Kitchens are no place for men**

WOMEN are convinced that men have a wonderfully easy time at the office, and that it is they who do all the hard work—in the house.

In fact, women have innumerable electrical devices to speed up housework. Yet what do they do with the time they save? Their mothers had none of these gadgets, and still found time to run all sorts of voluntary and social movements.

Labour-saving devices in my office mean that I can get through more work in the day, because there is always plenty more work to be done.

In the home, however, because the supply of work is limited, these gadgets merely give women more time in which to think how unhappy they are.—W. R. A., Hampshire.

Hidden Half

Your Supplement, "Science, Space And The Future" (JOHN BULL, November 24), was very interesting, but surely, if the moon is not stationary, there cannot be any uncharted region at the back of it.—R. T. FRENCH, Maxwellton Avenue, East Kilbride, Glasgow.

"The moon takes the same time—one month—to rotate on its axis as it does to revolve round the earth," says an astronomer. "Therefore, we only see one side of the moon. When the side we can normally see is in darkness—at the time of the new moon—the other side is facing the sun, but still cannot be seen from the earth."

Ambassador Extraordinary

On our last summer holiday my wife and I went from Oxford to Gloucester by road, through Stratford-on-Avon. A few miles out of Oxford, we picked up a young German hitch-hiker from Cologne, who wanted to visit Shakespeare's birthplace. During the journey he told us more about Shakespeare and Stratford than we ever knew before and, feeling a little guilty, we spent an instructive afternoon there.

Besides our young friend, there were crowds of foreign visitors—Americans, Indians and Africans among them. Surely Shakespeare was, and is, our greatest ambassador. E. W. SHEPHERD, Argyll Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex.

Guardian Spirit

The custom of touching wood ("Free Speech," November 17) surely harks back to primitive times when trees were believed to house spirits. To

touch wood then was to place oneself under the protection of the tutelary spirit of the tree. Later on, when Christianity came, this belief was taken over and given a Christian significance like so many others. — B. W. WOOD, Upney House, Barking, Essex.

Residents Only

I was surprised to read ("Free Speech," November 10) that no allowance is made for a housekeeper unless she is resident at the house where she is employed.

Section 214 of the Income Tax Act, 1952, clearly states that "female relatives resident with, or other female persons employed by, widowers or widows" are eligible for a housekeeper allowance. — IAN BARBOUR, Edinburgh, 12.

"In this section, the word 'resident' is taken to apply to 'other female persons employed'," says the Inland Revenue. "In a High Court case in 1937, in which a housekeeper was said to have attended daily and had full responsibility for running the house, the judge maintained that a resident must be a person sleeping at the house and ruled that the householder was not entitled to an allowance."

Glamour Gifts

There must be hundreds of women like me who receive household articles for Christmas and birthday presents—things like saucepans, ovenware and

plastic bowls, which are all very nice and useful but hardly romantic. Even after twenty-two years of married life I still long for a little glamour. There are so many lovely things in the shops, but there is really no fun in buying them yourself. And in any case, prudent wives just don't dare.

Why not a gorgeous lace handkerchief or a glamorous lipstick or perfume for a change? — MRS. V. BONIFAS, London, N.W.10.

Not Catered For

My young son tells me that lots of boys in his class at school would like to learn cookery, but no provision is made for this in the curriculum.

I should have thought that, in these days of working wives and mothers, a knowledge of simple cookery would be considered an essential item in anyone's education. —W. E. LOVERING, Markfield Road, Liverpool, 20.

"There is a shortage of housecraft training facilities," says an educationist, "and we can only manage to keep pace with providing for girls."

Last year, the General Certificate of Education examination in housecraft, which includes cookery, was passed by 14,576 girls—and twenty-four boys.

Banana Split

When serving in Mysore State, India, I was instructed to inspect the regimental football ground for ants ("Small World At Your Feet," JOHN BULL, November 10) and for any dangerous excavations.

The gardener and I found a queen ant in an ant-made "cavern." The forepart of her body was attached to a thin membranous sac, which contained countless embryo and enclosed the rear part of her body.

The gardener partly peeled a banana, made a hole in it with his finger and put the queen ant gently in the hole and started to eat. "How

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Prepare a delicious meal with
André Bouvet's exciting recipe for

Fillets Madras

Salt and flour three pieces of cod or haddock and cook in butter or margarine. For the curry: Brown a spoonful of onions in a pan with a little butter or margarine, add a coffee-spoonful of curry powder. Add 6 oz. of rice, season with salt, cover with a pint of water and cook for 12 minutes. Garnish each end of dish with the rice, place the fish in the centre and decorate with slices of lemon, tomatoes, and chopped parsley. Sufficient for three portions.

For the past two years head chef at London's Boulestin Restaurant, Lyons born Andre Bouvet learned his art in the most distinguished hotels and restaurants of Britain and France.

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

awful," I said, but he replied: "You eat egg, sahib—same like." And so it was, for the sac was of albumen.—H. AYRES, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire.

Accident Report

It is not correct to say that every road accident has to be reported to the police ("Free Speech," November 24). The Road Traffic Act, 1930, says that it is necessary to report an accident to the police within twenty-four hours only when particulars are not given at the time of the accident to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them.—P. W. T., Norwich.

Stable Companion

The "black houses" which have no chimneys, are fast dying out in north-west Scotland and the Hebrides, but at least one remains where the fire is a heap in the middle of the floor and the smoke escapes through a hole in the roof.

One day I went to one of these houses to deliver a message. Knowing the family well, I just walked in. The smoke was thick, but I thought I saw the owner by the fire, so I greeted him and passed on the message.

A few moments later, with tears running down my face from the peaty

smoke, I felt something moist nudging my hand. Peering closer, I found myself staring in the face of a black horse with a red shawl round its neck. The man explained later that he had "taken it in out of the cold, because it had a bad cough."—A. NICHOLSON, Ardmore Eochar, South Uist, Outer Hebrides.

It's The Custom

The War Office explains that a man must remove his belt and hat before he appears on a charge ("Free Speech," November 17) "so there will be no temptation to throw them at his commanding officer and so aggravate the charge." This is poppycock.

As a former Serviceman, four times charged, I know that if a man were foolish enough to want to throw something, he wouldn't bother to struggle with a tight belt or reach for his hat. He would probably snatch at the most convenient weapon—an inkstand, or an "in" or "out" tray. As for the double or treble marching, any Serviceman knows that it is far more difficult to march at this speed than at the normal one, especially in a confined space.

The real explanation is that the services are still steeped in a lot of useless "bull" and tradition.—D. R., Bracknell, Berks.

New Complaint

While recovering from a slipped disc I found that practically every other person I met has had one, too. But a few years ago slipped discs were unknown. Is this mysterious malady affecting the rest of the world, or just Britain, I wonder?—J. KIRKWOOD, London, N.W.2.

"Until 1934 the condition now described as a slipped disc was called sciatica or lumbago and given old-fashioned treatment," says a doctor. "Then doctors became interested, and ten years afterwards the public became aware of it.

"Slipped discs are known to be common in every country in the world."

Lighter Shelves

The librarian of one of the big public libraries said recently that about a thousand books were lost from the library every year.

This is difficult to reconcile with what I firmly believe is the basic honesty of the British public: one reads so often of purses and wallets containing large sums being restored to their owners intact. The total loss of books must be staggering.—P. J. L. BOYD, Padholme Road, Peterborough, Northants.

"There are about 63 million books in public libraries," says the Library Association. "Of these an average of one book in two hundred in stock is reckoned lost every year, either through theft or through people taking out more books than their tickets entitle them to."

Where's The Ref?

There is no reason why your reader whose previous injury won't allow him to play football ("Free Speech," November 17) shouldn't continue to enjoy a Saturday afternoon's exercise. He could become a referee and render a service to the game he likes at the same time. There is always a shortage of referees.—J. E. WRIGHT, Culmington Road, Birmingham, 31.

Application to become a referee must be made to county football associations, who conduct qualifying examinations. Coaching for the examinations can be obtained through the local referees' societies.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE RESULT OF JOHN BULL'S COVER CONTEST NO. 8 APPEARS ON PAGE 34

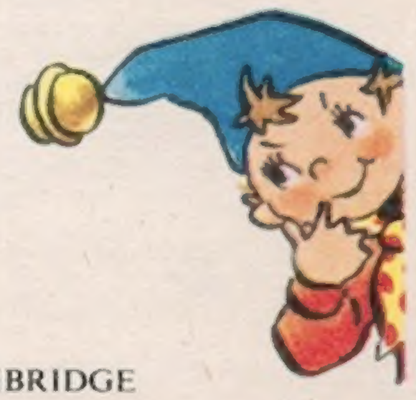
THE COVER

AND home to tell Grandmother all about it . . . the bubbling music, the sophisticated drinks, the shiny-haired young men. Oh Granny! It was such a wonderful ball. And Grandmother is delighted to take her word for it, since white hair and an antiquated shawl always belie a romantic heart which thrills to somebody else's happiness. The only thing that Batchelor's cover girl hasn't admitted is that she was the prettiest girl there. But Grandmother even knows that. She was in *her* day, and that sort of thing runs in families.

for full flavour and real fruit juice

Quiet please — all spoons at the ready — here comes a rich and sparkling castle of juicy, fruity Chivers Jelly — delicious.

And incidentally, have you any young folks who would like a Noddy collecting album? All you have to do is to send us their names and addresses with 4d. in stamps for each.



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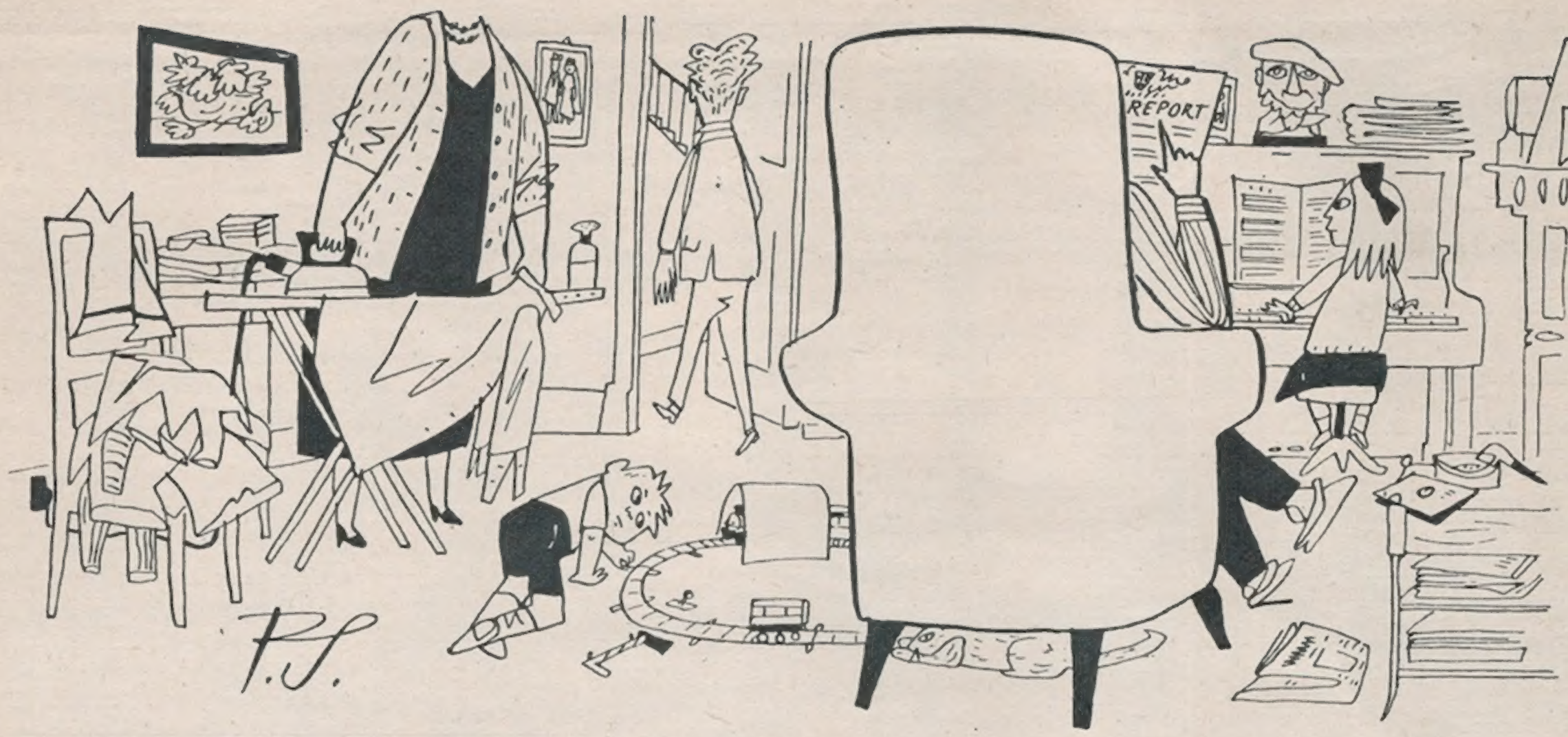


the things they say!

85 marks for Chemistry — the boy's doing well!

Yes, but I wish he wasn't quite so keen on Science.

Why? What have you got against Science?

I don't think it's the best course for someone who really wants to get on.

Nonsense! The scientist is going to be the key man of the future.

They're certainly not at present. The highest posts don't go to the scientists.

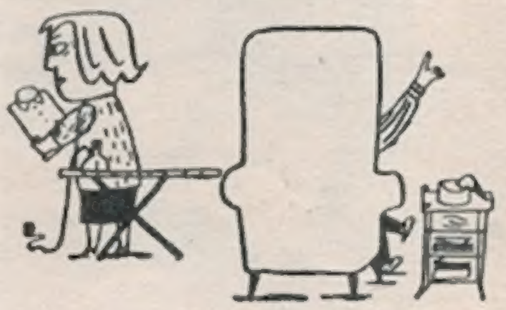
You're wrong, you know. This careers book from I.C.I. shows that the technical man has first-class opportunities with them. And not only on the scientific side — on the commercial and administrative sides, too.

Oh, a few good posts go to them, no doubt.

More than a few. It says here that 12 out of the 17 full-time Directors of I.C.I. are graduates in Science or Engineering.

Directors? That's a bit ambitious, isn't it?

All right. Listen to this: "of the men holding the 254 most senior posts, 160 are graduate scientists or engineers".



Have it your own way! You always get the better of me in the end.

Imperial Chemical Industries Limited

An assignment that began as a game—and led to murder

SAPPHIRES ON WEDNESDAY

by MALCOLM GAIR

MARK RAEBURN shut the door quietly, walked quickly across the hall and went down the stairs three at a time. As he went he remembered his raincoat; he had left it in the room which, an hour ago, had been his room. But he decided not to go back for it. If he went back, he might see Dummer again, and if he saw Dummer again he might hit him after all.

In the porch he passed the highly polished brass plates: *Vaughan & Pindle, Solicitors . . . Dexter & Dexter Ltd. . . . Paulinus School of Languages.* The plate of Mark's ex-employer gleamed less brightly: it was less highly polished. The doorkeeper didn't like Mr. Dummer either. The plate read: *The Dummer Agency. Private Detectives.*

Raeburn turned down the street and began to walk towards the park. As his immediate rage began to die down he decided that, as usual, he had been too impulsive.

He entered the park and saw the grass and the glint of water from the lake, and he forgot the dust of the city and the muted roar of its traffic. Instead, he remembered the Highland glen where he had grown up. It was a broad valley with high hills on each side, and it ran down to the sea, dotted with the white houses of the crofters.

If he, Mark Raeburn, were to go back now he could probably get a croft there. He would grow oats and make his own porridge; he would eat his own mutton; out in the bay were haddock and whiting and sea trout. In the evening he would go along to the post office for a gossip —a *ceilidh*—and his rusty Gaelic would grow fluent again.

On other evenings he would sit in front of a peat fire, reading or sharing a bottle of whisky with a neighbour. And instead of the voices and the traffic there would be the seagulls and the murmur of the sea. The peace of it . . . !

The dream lasted for one complete round of the park. Then he suddenly

Mme Malatino gestured at Mark. "Of course it is theft. I could have my brother thrown into prison"

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

"I'm Audie Malatino," the girl said. "Come on in." She turned and led the way up the steps. Mark noted how attractive she was

turned in his tracks and made for the gates, a tall figure hurrying out against the flood of people entering. For an hour he had forgotten it, but this was Tuesday, and he was meeting Walter Guest in the Duke of York.

When he entered the pub he was hot from walking, and the beer-smelling coolness was welcome. Walter was standing at the bar, drinking sherry. Mark said, without preliminaries: "Listen, Walter—I've quit Dummers. I had a row."

Walter raised his eyebrows a millimetre. "Let me see your hands," he said. Mark held out his hands, and Walter turned them over, examining the knuckles. "Not marked," he said. "You didn't hit him hard enough."

"I didn't hit him at all."

"My dear fellow!" said Walter. "Are you ill? Let me get you a drink. What will you have?"

Mark grinned. "I'll have a pint of bitter."

THE pub they were in was small and fairly full. The faces of the clients were reflected again and again in mirrors and tankards. Cut glass glittered and winked in shafts of sunshine as the door opened to admit newcomers. There was a loud hum of conversation. But Mark and Walter, sitting in a corner on two stools, were able to talk privately.

"What happened?" Walter asked.

"I found out one thing too many about Dummer." Mark put down his beer and took a long pull on his cigarette. His face darkened even further.

"I didn't know there was anything more to find," said Walter. His voice, like his gestures, was lazy. "Every solicitor in London knows Dummer is dishonest."

"You didn't tell me that when I went to work for him."

"I know better than to give you advice before it's asked for."

"Give me some now," said Mark.

"That means you've already decided on something. You wouldn't be asking me otherwise," said Walter.

Reluctantly, Mark smiled. "I have," he said.

"What is it?"

"I'm getting out."

"Where to?"

"Home. Scotland. More particularly, Argyllshire."

"For God's sake, Mark!" Walter smoked with dismay, his lazy manner falling away a little. "What to do?"

"I could get a croft there."

"You're not serious?"

"I'm dead serious."

"Oh, for God's sake!" said Walter. "Have some sense. You'd be wasting yourself." Mark's dark frown did not change. Walter looked at him for a long moment, and then decided to take a risk. "You'd be deserting Julie," he said.

Mark's fingers, which had been tapping the brass rail at the edge of the bar, suddenly stopped. "My wife doesn't need me," he said very coldly. "It makes no difference."

"You don't know that. You told me Professor Viering said your visits might be helpful. You must just go on. Seeing her, talking to her, being there, not deserting her."

"What should I do, then?" Mark asked. "Set up my own agency?"

"Yes. There's a lot of money in the game. You have the contacts. You have the experience."

"I haven't the capital."

"You know we'd lend you the capital, any day, and gladly." Walter spoke like a man repeating something familiar, which he was.

Then he was silent for a moment. He was anxious to persuade Mark, but at the same time he was desperately afraid of overdoing it and putting Mark's back up. Then he made up his mind to take the plunge. He said: "One of our clients was asking me to recommend a private detective yesterday."

"Who was it?"

"It's a woman," said Walter. "A Madame Malatino. She's Italian. Age about fifty. Appears to be rich. Lives in Sunningdale."

"And the job?"

"I can't tell you."

"You mean you don't know?"

Walter attempted to keep up his usual easy manner, but under Mark's searching gaze he gave himself away by crossing his legs and then quickly uncrossing them.

"What's wrong with Madame Malatino, Walter?" The question came suddenly and quietly, in Mark's softest Highland voice.

"What makes you think there's anything wrong with her? As her lawyer, I've nothing against her at all. She came to us with an introduction from a client of ours who knew her in Italy. She was going to settle here because she had a niece at a convent school in Ascot.

"She rented a house at Sunningdale. We did the business for her. She liked it and decided to settle there even after the niece left school. We bought the house for her—an expensive house. She paid the price, and our fee, on the nail. That was three years ago."

Walter, who had been speaking in a rapid, businesslike voice, hesitated briefly. Then he went on: "Oh hell, I suppose I just don't like her, that's all. She's a formidable woman. Overbearing. A bit theatrical. I don't trust her. One has a feeling there's nothing she mightn't do. A feeling that she's . . . dangerous." Walter broke off. "But I expect that sounds silly," he finished lamely. He noticed that Mark was looking at him with a curious kind of smile.

"On the contrary," Mark said gently. "I think it's one of the cleverest speeches I've ever heard."

"What do you mean?"

"Twenty minutes ago, when I came in here, I was disgusted with the business of private detective. I meant to quit. But first of all you gave me a smack on my conscience about Julie. Now you've worked on my curiosity. You've challenged my vanity."

"So?" said Walter.

"I'm going to toss the penny. I'll see Madame Malatino. If I get the job, and if I make a go of it—I'll be glad to accept your offer. I'll take a loan, I'll find an office. I'll go into business. If not—no. . . ."

WALTER'S firm of Witchlow, Witchlow and Foster occupied an old house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The rooms at the front of the building looked out over smooth green lawns and the spring foliage of trees. In one of these rooms, on the third floor, Mark Raeburn was waiting for Mme Malatino. It was Walter Guest's room, small but furnished as befitted a partner in a leading firm.

The desk was large, covered in red leather. The carpet was thick and silent. On the handsome table at Mark's side there stood a telephone with a button in the base. A touch on the button would bring a discreetly attractive secretary. Mark was surrounded by all the trappings of successful business.

Mme Malatino was due at 11.30. At 11.15 Mark stubbed his cigarette hard in the capacious ashtray, rose to his feet, and frowned out of the window. The stage-set luxury irked him. It was not that he didn't like it; it was because he liked it all too well. He looked out of the window again, at the spring sunshine — he wouldn't want to stay in his office all the time, as Walter had to. He needed excitement, action. The things were difficult to reconcile; success and money on the one hand; excitement and action on the other. But if there was one way in which they *could* be reconciled, it was by running his own agency.

The idea of going back to a croft in Scotland

Clearing up the mess in Miro's cabin was a steward. He looked up, startled and suspicious. Mark had to do some quick thinking

now seemed far away, a lost dream. He felt desperately impatient for the arrival of Mme Malatino.

The bell on his telephone purred. He waited a few moments, then picked the receiver up and said: "Yes?"

"Madame Malatino, Mr. Raeburn."

"Show her in."

She swept in, making a star's entry. "Mr. Raeborrne—at last! I nearly didn't reach you. Such stairs! Why don't you have your office more below?" Mark opened his mouth but before he could reply, Mme Malatino continued: "But I know. You need not tell me. You're young, you're beginning, so far not enough clients. But you needn't worry, Mr. Raeborrne," she continued as she sat down. "Mr. Guest tells me you are very clever. And discreet. In this case," said Mme Malatino very slowly, "discretion is *supreme*."

Mark looked at Mme Malatino. Her looks were still handsome, but too heavy. Her face was heavy and curiously pale.

"I can certainly promise you discretion," replied Mark.

"You can?" Her eyes fell on him formidably. "Then you shall. Promise you shall say no word to anyone of what I say—not even to Mr. Guest."

"Not even to Mr. Guest?" Mark asked.

Mme Malatino's handsomely shod foot tapped on the thick-piled carpet. "Certainly not to Mr. Guest. I do not choose there should be small talk about the Malatino family. What I am going to tell you is a great scandal. You will please promise it."

"Very well," Mark said. "You're entitled to absolute discretion. I promise it."

"Good!" Mme Malatino shifted heavily in her chair. "Now I will tell you.

"I have a brother, Mr. Raeborrne, called Miro. Miro is rich, has business in Milan, Rome, London, New York, Brussels. Miro and I were brought up together. We are very alike. Too alike. We quarrel. Two big quarrels, of years. Many little ones.

"It is a little quarrel when Miro throws his soup in my face at a family lunch party. It's still a little quarrel when I sink Miro's motor-launch in the lake." Madame Malatino nodded

Continued on page 38

Can we steal the sun's key to power?

by Dr. J. BRONOWSKI

A glass of water may one day provide as much energy as hundreds of tons of coal. And from pinhead hydrogen bombs may come the force to drive buses—when scientists learn to imitate Nature

THE largest single source of energy which man could command in the future may be the fusion of atoms of hydrogen. When we can control this, the power of the hydrogen bomb will be harnessed and will peacefully make electricity for homes and factories. Indeed, if we could fuse ordinary hydrogen, then a glass of water could yield as much energy as is contained in several hundred tons of coal—so that the hydrogen in water could become the world's richest fuel.

How far have we gone in the peaceful fusion of hydrogen? And how are we working towards it? To answer these questions, we must ask two other questions, which are more searching. What is the world made of? And how is it put together?

Everything in the world that we can see is made of smaller parts: that is plain, and we can test it for ourselves. If we have a loaf of sugar, we can cut it into lumps; if we have a lump, we can break it to pieces; if we have a piece, we can crush it into crumbs.

Yet it is also plain that this process of breaking cannot go on for ever. The crumb still has the taste of sugar, and we can imagine it crumbled finer and finer while it keeps the taste. But if it is to keep the taste, if it is to remain sugar, then there must be a smallest part of it beyond which we cannot go.

In the same way, there must be a smallest piece of every substance which is characteristic of that substance and not something else. There must be a smallest piece of salt, and of iron, and of pencil lead.

This is the way the Greeks reasoned about matter two thousand years ago. They already knew that there is a smallest piece of any substance; they called these smallest pieces atoms, which means "Indivisible." Then, during the last century, it was found that there are different kinds of atom. The things we handle every day can be taken apart, chemically, into elementary substances—hydrogen and carbon and oxygen and so on, and each elementary substance is made of one kind of atoms.

This was the state of knowledge almost to the beginning of this century. The world was made of atoms, and atoms were linked together in regular patterns to make the things we can see. Each elementary substance had its own kind of atom; there were nearly a hundred elementary substances, and therefore nearly a hundred kinds of atom. Thus the world seemed to be put together out of nearly a hundred kinds of building block, all different. Nothing simpler seemed then to be in sight.

SOMETHING simpler was found, almost in our own lifetime. It was found that the atoms themselves, all hundred kinds of them, are put together from a few simple units. This discovery was made in two steps, one at the turn of the century, and the other in the 1930s.

The first of these two steps was taken by J. J. Thomson, who was born in Manchester just a hundred years ago on December 18, 1856. Thomson was so clumsy with his hands that his wife, we know, would not let him knock in a nail. He had done almost no experimental work when he was made head of the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge at the age of twenty-seven. Yet he founded there, with his clumsy hands and his delicate observation, the greatest of all schools of physics. And in 1897 he proved that the atom is not indivisible. Every atom contains at least one much tinier particle: an electron.

The second step in taking the atom apart was made by James Chadwick in 1932, also at the Cavendish Laboratory. I was myself a research student at Cambridge at that time, and I can recall the excitement of that discovery, and the way in which it suddenly lighted up for us the dark puzzles of the atom. Chadwick showed that atoms can contain, besides electrons, only two kinds of particle: protons and neutrons.

With that, we reach the modern picture of the atom, and it is this. Every kind of atom, all hundred of them, is put together from three kinds of fundamental electrical particle. The proton and the neutron are heavy particles; the mass of each of them (they are not quite equal) is nearly two thousand times greater than the mass of an electron. The electron is so light that it really seems to be nothing but a tiny charge of negative electricity.

Atoms differ from one another simply in the number of protons, neutrons and electrons which they contain. In particular, each elementary substance is characterized by the number of protons which its atoms contain.

For example, every atom of hydrogen contains one proton, and only one. Every atom of helium contains exactly two protons. And so we go on up the atomic scale: every atom of carbon contains six protons, every atom of iron contains twenty-six protons. At the very end of the scale come the heaviest atoms: uranium which contains ninety-two protons, plutonium which contains ninety-four protons, and even heavier atoms made in the atomic pile.

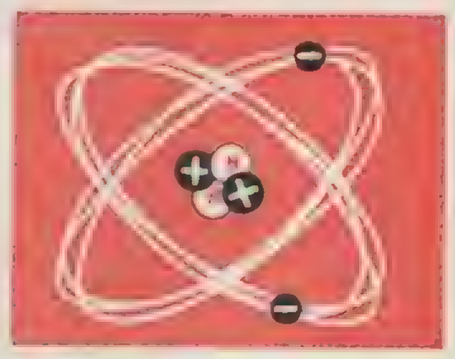
Every kind of atom has essentially the same structure. The heavy particles—the protons and the neutrons—are all at the centre; there they make up what is called the kernel or (in Latin) the nucleus of the atom. The light particles—the electrons—are all on the outskirts of the atom, where they form a kind of spinning cloud or shell.

For example, the atom of ordinary hydrogen has for its nucleus a single proton. (It is the only atom which contains no neutrons.) This proton is electrically positive, but the atom as a whole must be electrically neutral. Therefore the atom of hydrogen has, circling on its outskirts, a single electron, as shown in figure 1.

Next in the atomic list comes helium. Here the nucleus is made of two protons and two neutrons. Since the whole atom must be electrically neutral, the positive charges of the two protons must be balanced by two negative charges. Therefore there are two electrons circling on the outskirts of the atom of helium (figure 2).

In this way, step by step, every atom is built

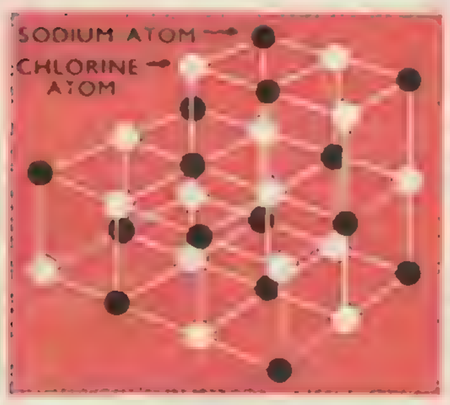
1. Atom of hydrogen



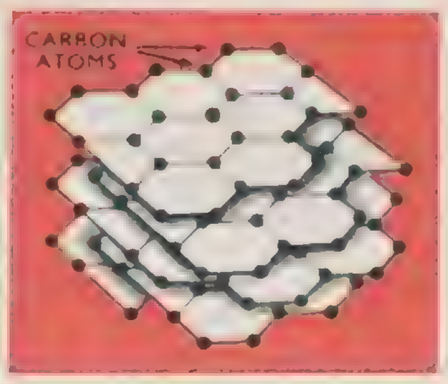
2. Atom of helium

3. Atom of heavy hydrogen

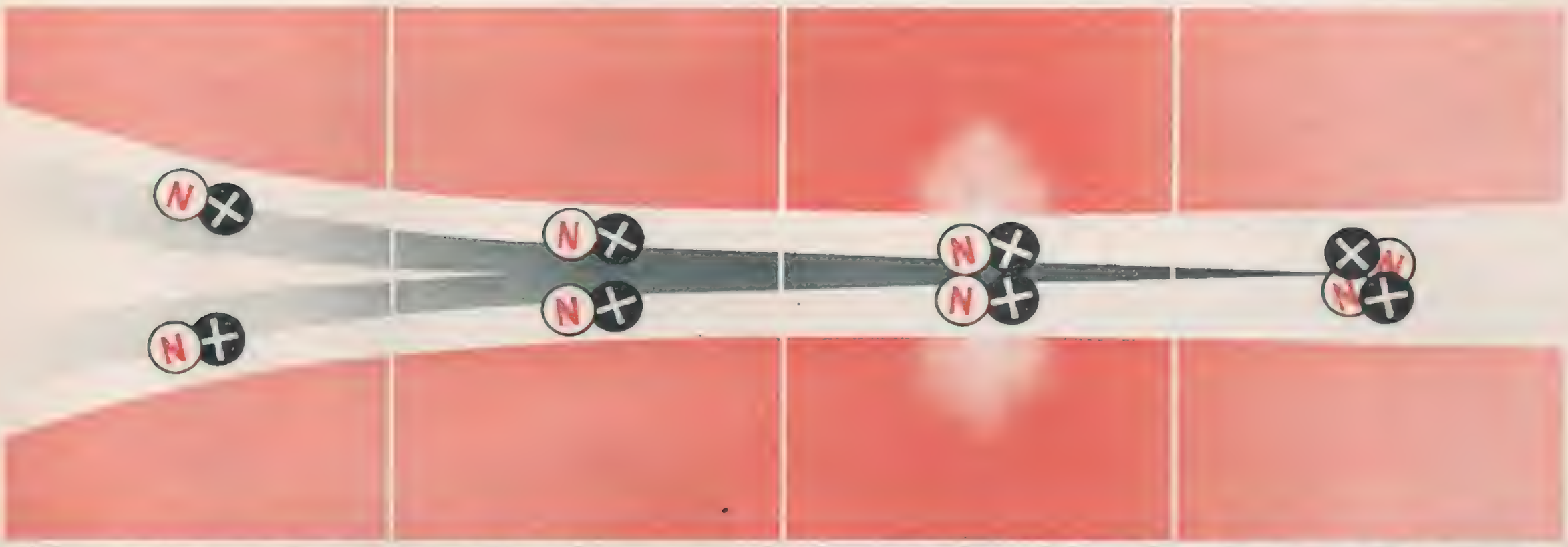
Proton (electrically positive) **Neutron** (electrically neutral) **Electron** (electrically negative)



In a particle of salt, sodium and chlorine atoms make a framework in which each kind of atom locks the other into place



Everything we see is made of atoms linked in regular patterns. In a particle of pencil lead carbon atoms are laid in sheets



Under intense heat, as in the sun, a nucleus of heavy hydrogen may be forced against another until the two fuse to form helium. One problem is to find a container able to stand such temperatures. The Russians have tried one method: passing huge voltages through heavy hydrogen in a tube

up, however complicated it is. For example, the atom of explosive uranium has as its nucleus ninety-two protons and 143 neutrons, and to make it electrically neutral it has ninety-two electrons circling on its outskirts. The atom of plutonium has a nucleus made up of ninety-four protons and 145 neutrons, and there are ninety-four electrons spinning round this.

There remains only one footnote to be added to this sequence. The atoms of an elementary substance all contain the same number of protons. But they need not all contain the same number of neutrons. It is possible to have variants among the atoms of the same elementary substance, which differ from one another by a few neutrons and nothing else.

These variants are called isotopes. For example, the ordinary variant or isotope of uranium differs from explosive uranium by having three more neutrons in its nucleus. Even so simple an atom as that of hydrogen has variants or isotopes. Figure 3 shows a picture of the isotope which is known as heavy hydrogen.

Like every hydrogen atom, this has one proton in its nucleus; and, to balance it electrically, one electron circling round it. It differs from ordinary hydrogen by having, in addition, one neutron in its nucleus.

There is an even heavier isotope of hydrogen which has two neutrons in its nucleus. But this does not occur in nature, and has to be made in an atomic pile.

The picture of the atom of ordinary hydrogen is easy to grasp. There is a single proton at the centre, fixed and massive like the sun. Round it whirls, far away, the light electron, like a planet round the sun. The positive proton holds the negative electron in its orbit by an electrical attraction, much as the sun holds a planet in its orbit by the attraction of gravity. This picture remains reasonable when we add one or two neutrons to the nucleus, in heavy or even extra heavy hydrogen. The neutrons have no electric charge, and there is therefore no reason why they should want to get away from the proton.

But the picture becomes strikingly different when we look at the nucleus of helium. Here there are two protons close together, and each has a positive electric charge. Surely the two protons ought to repel one another fiercely, and surely the nucleus of helium ought to fly violently apart?

It ought indeed, but it does not, and this is the puzzling secret of atomic energy. We cannot make a nucleus out of two protons, but somehow, in a way which we do not yet understand, the presence of the neutrons makes it possible for the protons to remain together in the same nucleus. Indeed, the helium nucleus is more tightly bound together than its parts: it weighs less than the sum of its parts.

It is as if the parts of the nucleus—the two protons and the two neutrons—are fused together in the nucleus. If once we succeed in bringing the parts together some of their mass disappears and is given out as energy. This is the binding energy of the nucleus, and whenever we use atomic energy, what we tap is the binding energy of a nucleus.

The nucleus of every atom has its own binding energy. The atoms in which the nucleus is most strongly bound together are those in the middle of the atomic list—such atoms as iron. Very heavy atoms are rather more loosely bound together, and therefore we can get energy by splitting them: this is why, for example, uranium gives us energy when we split it.

But in the economy of Nature, it is far more important that the very light atoms are more loosely bound than those in the middle of the atomic list. For this means that binding energy can be gained by fusing light atoms together. In this way, Nature is able to fuse hydrogen to make helium, and then to fuse helium to make carbon and oxygen and the other important elementary substances. The raw material of the universe is hydrogen, and Nature has to build everything else from this. We exploit the very secret of creation when we get energy from the fusion of hydrogen.

We know, from studying its light, that the sun contains hydrogen and little else. But there was discovered in its light, late in the last century, evidence that it contains a little of an elementary substance which had not at that time been found on earth. For this reason this new and remote elementary substance was given the name helium, after the Greek word for the sun. Helium was not found on earth until nearly twenty years after it had been seen in the sun.

About 1930, in those years when atomic physics suddenly burst into flower, it dawned on scientists what the presence of helium in the sun means. It means that the sun is actually making helium from its hydrogen by fusing atoms of hydrogen together. Because the helium nucleus is more tightly bound together than its parts, binding energy is released when the parts are fused together.

That is, in fusing hydrogen to make helium, the sun gains binding energy—atomic energy. This is the energy which keeps it glowing, and which streams out to us as light and warmth. Life on earth has always depended on atomic energy, and the sun has always been making this for us by fusing hydrogen into helium.

It had been an age-old puzzle to know where the sun gets the energy which keeps it glowing. When it was solved, twenty-five years ago, many other puzzles in astronomy fell into place. It became clear that all stars begin as clouds of hydrogen, and that they fuse this hydrogen into helium and later into other elementary substances. What makes them shine is the binding energy, which they gain from these fusions; all the stars shine by atomic energy. Everywhere in the universe hydrogen is the most common substance; atoms of it even drift about thinly in the almost empty spaces between the stars. Nature begins with hydrogen, and hydrogen is the stuff of creation.

Indeed, ten years ago, three young astronomers who were having tea together in Cambridge turned these facts into a bolder speculation. They asked themselves where these atoms of hydrogen come from in the first place, and whether they have really been drifting about since the beginning of time.

They gave some astronomical reasons for thinking that atoms of hydrogen are perhaps still being created out of nothing, at long intervals of time, one atom here and one atom there, in the spaces between the stars. One of the three young men was Fred Hoyle, who has since made the theory of continuous creation widely known. The theory remains an unproved speculation, but it reminds us how fundamental hydrogen is to the modern picture of the universe.

In every process for fusing hydrogen two protons must at some time be brought together and fused (with two neutrons) into a single nucleus of helium. We can use different variants or isotopes of hydrogen, and we can use in addition outside sources of neutrons, but the principle remains the same. The principle is most simply shown in the picture at the head of this page. There we imagine one nucleus of heavy hydrogen being forced against another until the two fuse together to make a nucleus of helium. This picture shows the essence of the process of fusion.

But how can one nucleus of hydrogen be forced against another? How can they be brought so close together that they will fuse of themselves, and the binding energy will fly out for our use? It can be done only if each nucleus is travelling tremendously fast. Then they can come into head-on collision in spite of the electrical repulsion between them.

Therefore the fusion of hydrogen is possible only when every atom is travelling at such wild speeds that there are many collisions. We must make the atoms travel very fast. How? By making the hydrogen very hot: for the hotter a substance is, the faster do its atoms dart about. To fuse

Continued on page 30

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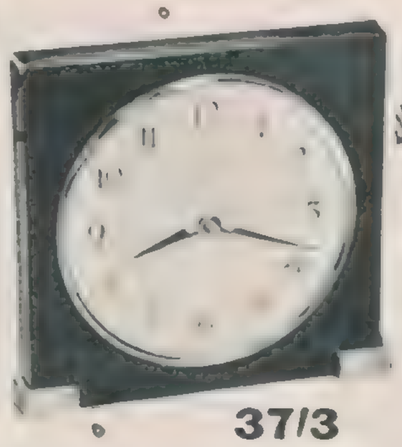

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THE SMALL WOMAN (2)

'They call us foreign devils'

by ALAN BURGESS

Children jeered, women threw mud at her. "They hate us here," said Mrs. Lawson. "You'll have to get used to it"

At first light next morning, seated comfortably inside a mule litter, a canopied platform secured upon the animal's back, Gladys Aylward started from Tsehchow on the last leg of her strange journey from London.

She had crossed Russia by train, and escaped from the Ogpu secret police in Vladivostock by persuading a Japanese ship's captain to smuggle her aboard his vessel. From Japan she had sailed to China and now she was travelling in the wild, mountainous hinterland towards Yangcheng, where she was to join Mrs. Jeannie Lawson, an elderly Englishwoman who was running a mission. For Gladys it was to be the start of a new life—she had been a parlourmaid in London: now she was to achieve her ambition and be a missionary.

On the second day after leaving Tsehchow, rounding a bend in the trail, the muleteer pulled his animal to a halt and pointed with a grimy forefinger, "Yangcheng!"

It stood far off on its mountain peak like a castle in a fairy story. The high walls grew from the natural rock like a tooth from a jaw. Delicate pagodas and temples, still only silhouettes, but made more mysterious by distance, rose high above the walls.

As they drew nearer Gladys saw that, among the barren mountains, two quite close to the city were covered with trees and dense foliage. The trail passed over one, tunnelling through green shades until it came out into the hard sunlight again and the path climbed steeply to the East Gate. On all sides there were glorious panoramas of mountain and valley.

At the East Gate, Gladys's muleteer halted and questioned one of the old men sitting there in the sun. He pointed to the narrow roadway that turned down left outside the city wall. The muleteer urged his beasts towards it. A hundred yards down the track, lined on both sides by the courtyard walls of houses and inns, he stopped and indicated a building.

Out of the door to meet them came a little woman with pure white hair and the bluest eyes Gladys had ever seen. She was dressed in the blue tunic and trousers which nearly everyone wore. She looked up at Gladys and screwed up her eyes in the light.

"Well, and who are you?" she asked huskily.

"I'm Gladys Aylward. You're Mrs. Lawson?"

"Yes, I am. Well, come on in."

She followed Mrs. Lawson into the house.

It was square, enclosed by four high walls—as most Chinese dwellings. From a square recess in the front wall, a small door led inwards to a large courtyard. The rooms of the double-storey dwelling opened on to balconies which looked down on to the courtyard. This house was almost derelict. Practically every door was off its hinges; there were piles of rubble on the flagstones, gaping holes in the tiled roof, dirt everywhere.

"I've only just managed to rent it," said Mrs. Lawson. "Got it cheap because it's haunted. Bit rough, but it'll be all right when it's cleaned up."

She hopped about like a chirpy bird, darting from room to room. Gladys followed her into what appeared to be the only habitable one. In the room stood a table and a couple of chairs. There was no other furniture except a few odd packing cases and soap boxes.

"Are you hungry?" asked Mrs. Lawson.

"Famished," said Gladys weakly.

Mrs. Lawson called out in Chinese, and an old man came in. He was introduced as "Chang, the cook."

Chang smiled at Gladys—an old Chinese with a toothless smile. She immediately warmed to

Gladys Aylward and Mrs. Jeannie Lawson turned a haunted house into a muleteers' hostel — the Inn of Eight Happinesses

him. A few minutes later he brought a large bowl of the inevitable boiled dough strings into which had been mixed some chopped vegetable. She ate it ravenously. After the meal she went out to get her baggage off the mule, and to look at the view.

As she turned the corner, a group of Chinese infants saw her and fled, howling. Some older children appeared over a wall, surrounded her, and began to jeer in singsong voices. Two women farther down the street picked up pieces of dried mud and flung them in her direction. In consternation Gladys walked quickly back to Mrs. Lawson and told her what had occurred.

"It happens to me every time I go out," said Mrs. Lawson calmly. "I usually come back covered from head to foot with the filth and mud they've thrown at me. So far, it hasn't been stones, thank goodness. They hate us here. They call us *lao-yang-kwei*, foreign devils. It's something you'll have to get used to."

Jeannie Lawson was five feet tall, seventy-four years old, and in appearance rather frail. She had arrived in China as a young girl of twenty-one, married another missionary, bore her children and saw her first-born die of the black fever; watched them all grow up and go off into the world: and she had outlived her husband by many years. She was determined to brandish the word of God in the face of all unbelievers, and in these mountains there were heathens to be shown the light of God.

Poor Gladys, in those early few weeks, found it hard to bear. Possessing a personal fortune of precisely five shillings, many thousands of miles from her homeland, speaking no word of the language, spat upon and reviled every time she moved from the house, she often came home in tears to wash the mud off her clothes.

One day, quite early in her stay, she was walking through the city. Within the walls the townspeople had become more or less accustomed to the "foreign devils" by now, and while they still moved out of their path, it was too much trouble to keep throwing mud. As Gladys walked towards the market square she saw a crowd gathering. Then she saw the Chinese woman who lived in the house next door and who smiled at her occasionally.

The woman beckoned her excitedly, and as Gladys, pleased at this sudden indication of friendship, came up to her, she grabbed her wrist and hurried with her through the crowd. The impetus of their rush took them right

"The government is impatient. You must take the job," the mandarin ordered her contemptuously. "The soldiers will be ready tomorrow"

to the front. Gladys was puzzled by what she saw. A man, shaven-headed, his pigtail looped round his forehead, stood there. He was bent forward, his shoulders hunched in a queer, almost pathetic manner. A soldier, his back to Gladys, stood close to him.

In bewilderment she stared, sensing the tragic, suddenly wide-eyed at the bright flash of steel as a curved execution sword swung high in the air.

Petrified, she glimpsed the blade poised aloft, burnished by the sun; shocked beyond comprehension, she watched it slash downwards.

Rigid, in utter horror, she saw the blade strike home, and the jetting man-spurt of scarlet blood arch upwards and splash softly on the flagstones. A gusty moan of suppressed excitement came from the crowd as the head bounced and rolled.

Gladys jerked her wrist free from the hand of the Chinese woman, who was completely obsessed by the scene, turned and forced her way frantically through the jabbering onlookers.

Jeannie Lawson was sitting at the table, writing, when Gladys burst in, almost incoherent with grief and shock. "Whatever's the matter?" said Jeannie, surprised.

"I've just seen a dreadful thing, a most dreadful thing," sobbed Gladys. "They've killed a man in the market square with a sword."

With deliberation, Jeannie, veteran of over fifty years in China, placed her pencil down at the side of her notebook.

"Well?" she demanded, curtly. "It is the law for certain crimes. Do you expect things to be the same in China as in England?"

"No, but——"

"Listen to me, Gladys Aylward. You haven't come here to China to alter their laws. They'll throw the body down the mountainside where it will be eaten by wolves or carrion birds. And they'll stand the head on the city wall so that everyone can see it. We'll try and change these things through the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ, by making them understand truth and justice, but we won't do it by running home blubbing our eyes out."

Later Jeannie explained her financial position. She had a small private income; the rent for the house, because it was old and derelict, and according to local legend full of ghosts and evil spirits, worked out in British currency at 2s. 4d. a year. Millet and wheat and vegetables cost only a few *cash*. The value of *cash*, the small copper coins with holes in the centre which were strung in bunches on pieces of string, was a few hundred to the Chinese dollar, which at this time stood at about 1s. 2d.

Financially, they were reasonably secure; but what was the use of security if they could not do the job for which they were both in China?

THEY arrived at their brilliant idea one afternoon as they were walking up the slope which led to the West Gate, after a short excursion into the countryside.

The early mule trains were already arriving to find lodging at the inns within the city walls. The whole purpose of Yangcheng's existence through the centuries had been this: a fortified post guarding an important trading route, a stopping place for mule caravans and travellers who passed along it. So great was the traffic that other inns had grown outside the city walls. Every night Yangcheng was packed with muleteers and carriers.

As the mule trains passed by, Gladys voiced her thoughts. "If we could only talk to these men, they'd carry our message for hundreds of miles through the province."

Jeannie Lawson walked on without a word for several paces. Then suddenly she turned to Gladys. "You've put your finger right on it," she said. "We'll open an inn."

Gladys stared at her, thinking she had not heard correctly. "Open an inn?"

"Of course! Why didn't I think of it before? Our house was originally an inn, hundreds of years ago. We've plenty of rooms: there are three *k'angs*"—communal beds—"specially constructed to sleep large numbers, two downstairs, one in the large room upstairs. We'll have to get the roof mended. We could put up at least fifty men and their animals. We've got a cook. It's not a hard business to feed them. Once we've got them inside we can tell them stories of the Gospels. The Chinese love stories. All the inns offer roughly the same service; we can only charge the regulated government price, two *cash* a night, but as an added inducement we shall tell them stories."

The roof was mended, the large courtyard cleaned out. New doors were fixed to the rooms. The balustrade round the first-floor balcony was rebuilt. The windows were repaired; as the panes were only made of opaque paper that wasn't too difficult. Large quantities of millet and maize and vegetables were soon stored.

"A name?" said Jeannie. "We must have a signboard outside the house giving the name of the inn. They all do."

"I suppose we could call it the Red Lion or the White Hart," said Gladys flippantly, "though I think my mother would be a bit shocked if she thought I'd come all the way to China to work as a barmaid in the Red Lion."

Jeannie Lawson laughed. "I've got it," she said. "A wonderful name . . . ! The Inn of Eight Happinesses. Isn't that good?"

A sign painter living in one of the narrow alleyways off the main street was commissioned to do the job, and three days later the narrow yellow signboard painted with Chinese letters in scarlet and blue hung outside their house in exactly the same way as a signboard outside an English inn. No one in Yangcheng thought it the slightest bit odd.

With the signboard up, the inn was officially open. The sign creaked invitingly in the wind. The smell of good food eddied out from Chang's kitchen, and they waited patiently for the first customers.

Muleteers crowded into the inn opposite, and the ones farther down the street. Muleteers and carriers plodded past, looking up at the inviting appeal of the "Inn of Eight Happinesses," but no one came into the hostelry of the "foreign devils." Obviously they were being boycotted.

Jeannie held a council of war. They decided that more seductive, or forceful, measures would have to be taken. "You," said Jeannie, levelling a stubby finger, "will be responsible for bringing the customers into the courtyard."

"But how?" protested Gladys. "If they don't want to come into our courtyard, how can I get them in?"

"It isn't a case of their 'wanting' to come in," said Jeannie positively. "You've got to drag them in."

"Drag them in?" Gladys's voice was at least one octave above normal.

Jeannie chattered in Chinese to Chang. He nodded his bald head in agreement.

APPARENTLY, according to him, there was a physical psychology attached to bringing a customer into a Yangcheng hostelry that was unique in the accommodation business. Some of the staider muleteers made reservations at the same inn every time they passed through. You did not try to poach them, that was unethical; but there were many other casual visitors.

When a muleteer came down the track looking to left and right at the inn signs, you took it that he was a casual. Legitimate prey! Then the innkeeper, who stood bland and benign at his courtyard door, went into action. As the lead mule passed he made a grab at the animal's head and tried to drag it into his own courtyard. The other mules were all tethered behind the leader with no choice but to follow. That, said Jeannie Lawson, was going to be Gladys's job—to capture a mule train.

"But what if they bite me?" wailed Gladys.

"Now don't be stupid," said Jeannie. "You're the youngest and most active. I'm too old. Chang will be busy with the food. You'll have to do it. . . ."

Gladys stood gloomily at the doorway of the inn and waited for business. The inducement she offered, a sentence in which she had been carefully coached by Chang, announced: *"Muyo beatch—muyo goodso—how—how—how—lai—lai—lai."* The translation of this lugubrious refrain being: "We have no bugs, we have no fleas, good, good, good, come, come, come!"

Gladys tried it out on the first three mule trains which clopped past her. Neither animals nor muleteers took the slightest notice. Anxiously she realized that physical assault was

Continued on page 32

With Gladys and some of her converts, Chinese muleteers (back row) attended the funeral of Mrs. Lawson. Gladys sent this picture to her mother in London

What a beautiful creature she was! Piet told her that it gave him a pain to look at her. "That is love," she said, and kissed him

Son of the veld

by STUART CLOETE

ILLUSTRATED BY WYLES

This wasn't like Piet at all. . . . In love, of all things! And with a policeman's daughter!

PIET MARAIS loved his mother and hunting. He hated girls and the police. Both were dangerous to liberty. Maybe it was liberty that he loved best.

A man with a girl—a wife—was like a knee-haltered horse. Every time he raised his head to stare about him he was aware of the *riem* that held him fettered. A married man was crippled, bound. Besides, Piet told himself, with a mother like his, what need had a man of a wife? He thought of the bread she baked, of the biltong she made, of the pickles, the jams and preserves. He thought of the poultry she raised, of the vegetables in her kitchen garden.

One day, perhaps, he would have to marry, but that day was a long way ahead. He looked out over the veld where a dozen tall grey cranes walked through the grass, like women, trailing their sweeping tails. A few rose on wide wings, uttered a creaking cry and then settled down again. It was a pleasure to watch them—to watch anything that was free.

Beyond the birds, beyond the boundary of his farm, was the place where he had had that last brush with the police. He'd just shot a *kudu* bull, and they had warned him that if they caught him again they'd run him in. They said it was a mile from his own boundary. He had said: "And what's a mile when no one farms here? It belongs to some man in the city who never comes. Besides, we have always hunted here—I, and my fathers before me."

"Well, you can't now," the policeman said. "That is the law."

"The law!" he'd answered. "Man, we were here before the law."

"Well, the law's here now, and it's come to stay," the policeman said.

What an idea! Of course, it all meant nothing, except that he'd have to be more careful. But it was hard to think of policemen as human beings. Hard to believe they had mothers, were loved by someone, were even born as other men. He saw them born in khaki, booted, belted and spurred, equipped with helmets and revolvers—infant monsters, enemies of freedom.

He pulled out his watch. It was as large as a child's ball. He was hungry. His stomach rumbled. *Before heaven*, he thought, *I'm so hungry, I could eat a policeman*. But it was a pleasure to be hungry. Soon his mother would call, and then they would eat. There would be roast guinea fowl and cold buck, and rice and pumpkins and potatoes and bread and jam, and coffee to drink; everything of his own growing, including the wheat for the flour, except the coffee, the sugar and the rice. On a good farm, with a good mother, a man lived well.

His mother called him. During the meal they did not speak. After it, he gave thanks with bent head and lowered eyes.

It was then that his mother said: "What about this dance, Piet? Are you going?"

"Dance, Ma? Me? With girls? I can't."

"Why not, Piet? Do you want men to think you are afraid?"

"Me afraid? When all men know I am quite fearless, as bold as ten lions?"

"Well, that is what men say. It is the talk of the village. It makes me ashamed that they say my great son, big as an ox, is afraid of small maidens—that any girl can put him to flight by just waving her handkerchief."

"Ah," he said, "that is something. *Ja*, that is something indeed. Just because I do not like them——"

"Then go and show them."

He banged his fist on the table. "If they think that, I'll go."

"It is on Saturday," his mother said.

When he came back from the lands, he found his mother pressing his best suit. . . .

The dance was held in the big shed that belonged to the owner of the Boomspruit Emporium. It had been splendidly decorated for the occasion with hanging flags of many nations, and was illuminated by stable lanterns hanging from the rafters.

There was a homelike smell of kerosene and hides and cheese—of all the stores which usually occupied the building. And then over this, like a cloth laid over a table, came the smell of people—of naphtha from the men's clothes, which had just been taken out of mothballs; of perfume from the girls, of dust from the concrete floor, of the strong tobacco that was being smoked, of beer, of brandy.

The men's dark clothes made them almost invisible when they moved out of the lantern light. The girls, bright as butterflies, and as active, fluttered in circles about their invisible partners.

That was the way it looked to Piet when he stood at the door—as if he would be the only man, as if he would be overwhelmed.

Then suddenly everything—his whole life—changed. The past withered. The future opened like a flower. Never had he thought he would see a girl like that, so small, so perfect, so alive—like a little *rooi bekkie*, a little red-billed finch, in a bright frock that covered her as lightly as if it were a flame.

She stood alone, as if looking for someone, as if waiting.

For me, he thought. *It has been meant. I have been directed here by the great forces which govern the world; by God.*

He walked up to her. "I am here," he said. He put out a hand as big as a soup plate. "I am Piet Marais," he said.

The girl looked up at him, her eyes wide open with surprise. "My name, *meneer*," she said, "is Francina Fourie."

"I have never seen you before."

"And does Meneer Piet Marais imagine that he has seen everyone in the world?"

"In my world I have seen them," he said, "in the world of Boomspruit and the mountains which surround it. . . . *Ja*," he said again, "there is not a man, nor a woman, nor a child for a hundred miles around this place that I do not know."

"And the girls," she said, "do you know them all, too? Do you think that if you knew a child when she was twelve, you would know her as a woman of nineteen? Women are not like cattle," she said. "They change," she said. "They change from day to day—even from hour to hour."

Piet put an enormous hand on her back, seized her wrist and drew her on to the dance-floor. He was alone with her. He saw no one. He did not have to. He was so large that everyone got out of his way. She was so small that she was scarcely visible against him.

Piet danced well. He had danced a lot as a boy.

"It is like swimming, Francina," he said, "dancing with you. You may not swim for

"In here!" said Piet. He parted the bushes to let Francina's father enter

Maple Brazil Cream. Crisp Brazil Nut pieces blended with the intriguing flavour of maple fondant and dipped in full-cream milk chocolate.

What a lovely assortment!

STEP IN BRISKLY. Step in joyfully. Step in *now* and ask for Murray Regent. The jolliest assortment in the world of sweets. Brilliantly wrapped — they're things of beauty. So delicious! — they're a joy forever. Under that chocolate covering is pure delight. Full cream milk. Pure dairy butter. Brazils. Coconut. Picked — oh, so choosily — by a panel of tasters. No wonder they're wonderful. You'll adore them.

Coconut Cube. Delicious milky coconut centre in rich full-cream milk chocolate.

Montelimar Nougat. Soft delicious nougat flavoured with the finest honey and containing selected nuts and the choicest cherries.

Raspberry Cup. Chocolate coated, creamy fondant with rich raspberry jelly.

Fondant Delice. A melt-in-the-mouth centre, flavoured with pistachio, and chocolate covered.

R. S. MURRAY & COMPANY, BRENTFORD, MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND.

MURRAY REGENT

years; then you fall in the water and you can still swim."

"You do not dance much?"

"I never dance now."

"Why not?"

"Girls," he said. "I cannot bear girls."

"And what do you think I am, *meneer*? A boy?"

He looked down at her. "I had not thought of it," he said. "But you are right."

"*Ja*," she said. "I am a young girl. Pretty, some say. Of marriageable age and looking for a husband."

"That's what always frightens me," he said, "girls looking for husbands, girls waiting to catch the first man they can entice into their fathers' parlours. That is a terrible and frightening thing to consider if you are a man."

"You find me terrible and frightening?"

"You are not the same."

She drew away from him and swept him a curtsy. "*Meneer*," she said, "I am a young woman and, like all young women, I seek a husband. One who is handsome, rich and kind."

"That is good, then," he said, "for I am not handsome. I am not rich, except in land and cattle, and I am not kind." He looked down at her. "Do you know what I am?"

"No," she said.

"I will tell," he said. "I am a beast in human form. I like to hunt and ride over the veld. And besides, I have no need of marriage. I have a splendid mother, a mother in a thousand."

"All mothers are splendid," the girl said. "That is what I should like to be."

He was staring down the parting of her hair. It was like a little trail through the long grass of the veld. It was a miracle to him. It was as if he had never stared down on the top of a girl's head before.

"It is beautiful," he said. "Like a little pathway."

"What is?"

"The parting in your hair."

She said: "You did not hear what I said about what I wanted to be?"

"No," he said. "What do you want to be?"

"To be a wife and a mother."

"A mother is a wonderful thing."

"But there must be a man. A husband."

"You will find one," he said, "without difficulty. You are so beautiful." It struck him, as he spoke, that he did not like the idea of a husband for her. "Come out," he said, "out into the air. I stifle here."

"*Ja*," she said.

THE warm darkness of the yard enveloped them. The music was faint, the dancers pale, half obscured by the dust of the dance floor that rose like smoke about their feet.

Piet felt very peculiar. "Let us sit," he said. They found some farm implements. He lifted her on to the seat of a hay rake. He sat on the seat of a four-furrow disc plough. Then he got up and sat down on the spring tines of the hay rake below the girl. He found her hand in his.

"You have very small hands," he said.

"You have big hands."

"That is because I am big."

"And I have small hands because I am small."

He thought how wonderful she was; so beautiful, so clever.

Then he said, rising: "I must see you again."

"Why?"

"Because I must. You have done something to me."

"What have I done?" He could see her face, pale in the night, turned towards him.

"You make me feel queer," he said, "faint; and you give me a pain in the belly." He put his hand on his belt-buckle.

"You say pretty things to girls, *meneer*. You must charm them all."

"I never speak to girls, but I am a truthful young man. You give me a pain, so I tell you."

"It could be love," she said.

"Love is not a pain," he said.

"Some people say it is. Besides, *meneer*, I have a pain, too, when I look at you."

"It must be something we have eaten."

"But we have eaten nothing here. That is another sign. Not to eat is a sign of love."

"Oh, no," he said, "it is not love. If it was, you would not say so. You are a well-brought-up young girl. You would never say such a thing. But I must see you again."

"And get another pain?"

"I do not know. But I must see you."

"I shall not run away," she said.

"Who is your pa? How long are you here for? Are you visiting?"

"No," she said. "We shall be here for some time. My pa is Sergeant Fourie. He has taken over the police."

"A policeman's daughter! That is not possible. I hate policemen."

"You need not go out with my pa."

"But I must," he said. "That will be the only way." A plan had sprung, fully matured, into his mind. He must make friends with her father before he found out too much about him.

"*Ja*," he said. "I was wrong. Your father must be a wonderful man—quite different from all other policemen. Come along. I will take you home to your father at once. I cannot wait to meet him."

He pulled her off the rake. She landed in his arms. He put his arms around her. "Do not fall," he said.

"I shall not fall if I cling to you." She clung.

"Do not cling so hard," he said. "I cannot breathe." His breath was coming in gasps.

"And the pain in your belly is worse?"

"Worse?" he said. "It is unbearable."

"That is love," she said, and she stood on her toes and kissed his lips. He trembled for an instant; then he kissed her.

He said: "You must be right. It is love." Then he asked: "Is that the way to kiss? That is what they do in the films. I have watched them carefully."

"Why did you watch?"

"I watch everything. It is good to learn. One never knows when things will come in useful. Strange knowledge is often useful."

"Like now," she said.

"Like now." He kissed her again.

"This is my car," he said, as he pushed her into an old open tourer. "It is a good thing to have a car if one is in love. I have seen that on the films, too. They drive like this." He put an arm around her.

She wriggled away. "And the girls do like this. I have seen films, too, Piet."

He laughed. "But you will not always do like that?"

"No," she said. "But you are taking me home to my pa. Do you want him to see me all rumpled up?"

"You think I would rumple you?"

"*Ja*," she said. "If it is love, you would rumple and crumple me."

HE thought for a moment. Then he said: "You are right. You are very wise. When I look into my heart I know I should rumple you. What surprises me is the wisdom of one so young. How do you know what I will do better than I know myself?"

"That, Piet, is what they call a woman's intuition. It is a sixth sense that no man has."

He had no doubt she was right. Women had strange powers.

"Turn here," she said, "and it's the third house down."

"Why, that was Sergeant Coetzee's house," Piet said.

"We took it over from him," she said. "We must go in. My father will be waiting for me."

"And your ma?"

"I have no mother. She died when I was quite young."

Her father greeted them. He was reading the paper, sitting near a table lamp, but got up when they came in, a tall man with greying hair. He was wearing his uniform trousers, but had on no jacket or tie.

"*Meneer* Piet Marais brought me home, Pa," Francina said.

"That was good of him."

"Oh, no!" Piet said. "I liked doing it."

"He has a fine car, Pa."

"An old car, *meneer*, but it goes." Now he must do what he had come to do. "*Meneer*," he said, "do you like to shoot? Because if you do, would you like to come out with me on Saturday? I will fetch you in my car, and we will have fine sport."

"That is very kind of you, Piet. I do not know many people here yet, and it will be good to get out on the veld again with a gun."

"Saturday, then," Piet said. "I will be here

Continued on page 43

TWO SHORT STORIES BY BRILLIANT AUTHORS

Vernon Bartlett

The Tanganyika Highlands Hotel was run by two delightful people. But how they hated each other! It was all . . .

A MATTER OF ROOM NUMBERS

Hugh Michael Hogan

Uncle told the most enchanting tales, and the best of them all was his own love story . . .

THE COURTSHIP OF UNCLE CONAL

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

With dramatic stunts Frank Page boosts his cinema. He has smugglers caught with gold on the shore, and drops wage packets in the street

Showmanship packs the house

by DON EVERITT

Before showing the film *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*, Page searched the town to find seven married brothers. Then he held a dinner party for them and their wives

Engaged couples took part in a stunt run by Page (left) to publicize *Wedding Breakfast*. The winners got a wedding breakfast, photographs and possession of a flat

THE Regent Cinema on the sea front at Deal, Kent, was losing money. When Frank Page took over the managership in June, 1954, its takings had fallen to £180 a week. Film rentals took £100, wages about £70, and other overheads more than what was left. Page had orders from his employer to get the Regent solvent quickly.

Within ten weeks, he doubled the takings. In one week in September, he grossed more than £600. At no time since has the cinema's income dropped below £300 a week.

A sleekly good-looking young man, Page has successfully combated the cinema box office decline with a ceaseless barrage of publicity stunts which would have done credit to Phineas T. Barnum himself. Week after week, he energetically forces his cinema, his films and himself on the people of Deal. "I make them think the films are so good they can't afford to miss them," says Page. One of the town's traders puts it differently: "He positively bludgeons the public into the cinema."

For a week's showing of a film called *Prize Of Gold*, Page organized thirty-nine separate stunts. In the streets he dropped imitation gold bricks and keys, some bearing free admission tickets. He held contests involving goldfishes, goldfinches, golden weddings, golden hair. Customs officers trapped smugglers carrying gold to the shore. A long-haired prospector dug the beach for gold. Patrons at the cinema entered a free competition for a gold watch. Every twentieth person won a tin of golden syrup. "We really packed them in that week," says Page.

During Page's first few weeks at Deal in the summer of 1954, the weather threatened to wreck his publicity for a forthcoming wide-screen Hollywood epic. The town flocked to the beach to lie in the sun. Takings dropped.

Not to be outdone, Page sent two girls in swimsuits to a quiet spot to lie in the sun for a day with stencils stuck to their backs. They spent the rest of that week uncomfortably parading the crowded beach with banners burned literally on their backs, declaring: *The Robe*—REGENT—NEXT WEEK.

Still not satisfied, Page took a projector and screen on to the beach and showed parts of the film. The weather lost the fight. It was with *The Robe* that Page grossed more than £600.

FRANK PAGE'S tactics demonstrate one answer to the slump which today besets the British film exhibitors. Between 1950 and 1955, there was a net closing down of 125 cinemas in this country. In the first quarter of this year, another thirty-five went out of business, and since the 1956 Budget, which brought no entertainments tax relief, the lights have gone down faster still. Admissions in 1955 fell to the lowest figure for fifteen years. The decline continues.

J. Arthur Rank announced in October that he would close seventy-nine of his 528 cinemas in the next few months, and Associated British Cinemas, the second largest circuit in the country, talks of shutting another twenty-five to thirty theatres. Some authorities forecast that in the next year the number of cinemas will drop by eight hundred to around 3,600.

In this mass shut-down, the smaller exhibitors, who own two out of every three cinemas, will suffer most. Many of them operate in suburbs or small towns and, unlike the major circuits, they cannot cut their losses and concentrate their business in town or city centres. Many, too, cannot afford the higher rents payable for films immediately on general releases and have to wait for what the trade calls the subsequent-run: this is cheaper but much less profitable.

Perhaps for the small exhibitors, Frank Page has the only answer in bringing showmanship to the cinema. In his case, this has produced the increased revenue necessary to entertain his patrons with first-run films.

Page's success while other cinemas go out of business does not impress him. "It's my job

Bathing girls, with an advertisement stencilled on their backs by the sun, helped *The Robe* to become Page's biggest success. He also showed parts of the film to crowds on the beach

to sell seats," he says. "I do it the best way I know. You can't sit back and expect the public to come pouring in. You've got to fetch them."

Page fetches them in so impressively that he recently won two national showmanship contests, one for the second time in three years. Since 1953, he has won £746 in prizes for showmanship. "On the debit side," he says, "my hairline has receded noticeably."

Page works forty hours a week on publicity alone, and plans his campaigns six weeks in advance.

Once, at his previous cinema in London, Page started a stunt two months before the film's opening night. Every morning on the bus from Highgate to Islington, he knitted baby clothes. He parried the wisecracks, explained only that he was preparing for a happy event, and aroused so much interest that people queued to catch his bus. He knitted two pairs of bootees, two matinée jackets "which would have fitted me," and half a cardigan.

In the last week of the stunt, he opened his overcoat every morning and revealed the happy event on a poster: *"We Want A Child,* showing all next week at the Rex, Islington." Page says: "I thought it was a poor film, but it played to packed houses."

Page believes in getting the staff to help with stunts. At Islington, an usherette paraded outside the cinema wearing a bathing costume and carrying an umbrella. One night the entire staff went to a printing office to stick notices in several thousand copies of a newspaper. The doorman at the Regent last summer attempted to cling to a buoy four hundred yards off shore for three days to advertise *All The Brothers Were Valiant*

A large crowd watched his departure, then peeped at him through a telescope. Page says he forgets whether the man completed the endurance test, but observers reported seeing him return to the shore at dusk on the first day.

Once or twice Page has reckoned without the hard work his stunts would bring him. He offered a prize to the person who wrote the title of a film the highest number of times on a postcard. Hundreds of cards arrived. "I had to count the darned things. It took me two whole days and drove me pretty nearly stupid." Another time Page held a competition among schoolchildren for the best essay on *Richard III*. He read five thousand.

The best publicity, Page believes, goes by word of mouth. Early in his managership at the Regent, he discovered that one middle-aged patron, a bachelor scrap merchant of fifty-seven, had been to the cinema practically every day for years. Page announced that he had found the "world's most regular cinema patron" and gave him a free ticket and his own seat for life.

"He's the best advertisement I've got. The whole town knows about his hobby. On his rounds with his cart in the morning, people ask him 'What's the programme like at the Regent, Jim?' Since he likes almost any film, he tells them that it's smashing."

Page devotes part of his publicity work purely to creating good relations between himself and his cinema and the town. Not long ago he enlisted the generosity of the local traders to give two specially chosen old age pensioners a day out. He did the same for three young orphans.

On another occasion he asked the people of Deal to turn out their old umbrellas. He then persuaded an umbrella factory to re-cover the umbrellas in return for free publicity in the cinema. When a film entitled *It's Always Fair Weather* came to the Regent, Page gave two hundred renovated umbrellas to the old age pensioners of Deal.

Not all his stunts succeed, but one idea which Page expected to fail came off brilliantly. In connection with the film *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers,* he announced that he wanted to find seven married brothers in Deal, a town of 25,120 people. Seven married brothers did present themselves to be entertained by Page, and the stunt earned widespread publicity.

PAGE, who is married and has one child and another expected, has made himself such a part of local life in Deal that earlier this year he was invited to stand as a Conservative candidate in the town council elections. For once, Page employed no stunts. In two weeks, he called on all 4,727 houses in his ward. He topped the poll.

Born in Winchester on June 4, 1930, Francis Boyd Page first gave vent to his showmanship soon after he left school when he became founder, compère, comedian and crooner of his own amateur concert party. Hughie Green auditioned him for *Opportunity Knocks,* but a throat infection put an end to his stage career.

After working five years in a medical laboratory at Winchester, Page joined the Metropolitan Police. "I stuck that for a year, then got a job as a trainee cinema manager. I worked my way up through cinemas at Dartford, Welling, Rugby and Bedford until my present employer, who owns half a dozen cinemas, appointed me manager of the Rex at Islington in 1953."

Like the Regent at Deal, the Rex had fallen on hard times; but not because of tax or television. "The local people were too scared of Teddy Boy gangs to go near the cinema."

Page decided that he could clean up the cinema only by treating the Teddy Boys with their own methods. When a fight broke out one evening between rival gangs, he waded into them with a heavy torch, knocked out three and quickly quietened the rest. Another evening, a Teddy Boy jabbed a broken bottle in the cinema doorman's face. With one of his staff, Page chased and caught him. The Teddy Boy subsequently went to jail.

In time, Page got to know the trouble-makers, refused them admission and the cinema began to enjoy more civilized patronage. One evening, however, five Teddy Boys tried to force their way in without paying. When Page barred their way one swung at him and missed. "I knocked him half-way through the cashbox, but the others made a bit of a mess of me before we got rid of them."

As a legacy of that night, Page has suffered in the past few months from periodic insomnia, headaches and dizziness. Recently, a doctor detected a piece of chipped bone in his nasal sinuses. Page goes into hospital shortly to have the bone removed. "When I came to Deal, they told me I had a tough job on my hands. But after the Rex the Regent was child's play."

Once Page dropped in the streets four hundred sealed wage packets containing advertisements for a forthcoming film. Later that day a police constable called on him to report that he had found a wage packet marked £7, presumably lost by a cinema employee. The constable asked Page to accompany him to the station to watch the opening and examination of the packet. For ever eager to give a stunt an extra twist, Page politely obliged.

"For a moment, when they found I had pulled their legs, they looked icy, and I saw myself on a charge of false pretences or littering the streets or something. Then, fortunately, they saw the joke." THE END

Scrap dealer Jim Marsh visits the films almost every day, so Page gave him a season ticket. The best publicity, he says, goes by word of mouth

Now everything depended

JUNGLE AMBUSH

by EDWARD LINDALL

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH WYNN

A girl like Jane wouldn't know how to beat these savages. . . . All she had ever learned was history

PINPOINTS of anger flared in Barron's eyes as he looked away from the girl sprawled behind the log. They had been trapped on the sweltering river bank for half an hour now, and escape had become an urgent bitterness between them.

Somewhere in the steaming jungle the raiding natives were skulking, waiting for sundown to avenge their fumbled ambush. And sundown was only three hours away.

"You'll go now," Barron said. "We'll slide this log into the river. You can ride it down to the coast, get aboard the launch. Meanwhile I'll stay here and distract these monkeys."

Jane Kingdom lifted the rifle cradled on her forearms, and leaned it against the log. "Who's going to distract them for you?"

"I'll wait till sundown," Barron said curtly. "Darkness will cover me."

She watched him for a moment, then reached down and pretended to adjust the gaiters she wore with the man's trousers and khaki shirt. "I'll wait, too," she said. "I don't like running away."

"You'll do as I say," Barron snapped. He swung around, Tommy gun in hand, his lean face flushed beneath its sallow tropic tan. "You got us into this. Now let me get us out."

He knew the words were brutal, even unjustified. But there was something about her that played tricks with his self-control. The loveliness of her face; the way she talked in a slow, soft American drawl; the way she walked—all those things assailed the discipline which New Guinea had forged in him, creating stresses he had never known before.

It had been like that since she had arrived at his headquarters three weeks before, armed with authority from Moresby to go anywhere. She was writing a history for some American foundation—a history of white settlement in the Pacific islands.

It had been like that this morning, when she had persuaded him to leave the launch at the river mouth and bring her inland to see some native villages. All his training had told him not to move without police boys, even so much as a mile. But she had persisted, and he had given in. Now they were paying for it, because the jungle always punished carelessness. Barron was paying for it doubly, because he knew he should never have allowed it to happen.

"What d'you want me to do?" Jane Kingdom asked coldly. "Apologize?"

"No," Barron said. "Just try it my way, for a change."

She sat up then and perched on a criss-crossed heap of brush. Her face was white, and strain showed in her grey eyes and on her soft, full mouth. "You despise me," she said bitterly, "don't you?"

Barron looked past her to the broiling water of the Wampit, racing past four feet or so below them. There was no beauty in the river, nothing for contemplation, but he was unable at that moment to meet her gaze.

"You should've stuck to your books," he said. "You're out of place in this country."

"A nuisance, you mean?"

He turned to face her then, stung by the

n the river. . . . They clung tightly to the log as the savage force of the current dragged at their bodies, trying to tear them away

whiplash of scorn in her voice. "If you want to put it that way," he said harshly. "Anyone's a nuisance who interferes with my work— for nothing."

"Nothing?" The word was a missile, the way she threw it at him. "Is history nothing?"

"What does it do?" he demanded. "Does it stop headhunting? Does it train nurses? Does it help natives make better gardens?"

"It can teach," she said coldly. "Even you could learn from other men's experience."

BARRON lifted his left arm and, with the shirtsleeve, wiped the pooling sweat from his forehead. The jungle heat was a vast, soggy compress drawing their energy out through their pores. But he sopped the sweat not merely in a hopeless pursuit of comfort. He needed the pause to slow down the unreasoning anger that was threatening his judgment.

"Experience is what you've learned for yourself," he said evenly, "not what you read in books. In this country you don't live in the past. It's the present here. And the future." He slapped the Tommy gun, thrust forward his holstered pistol with a quick, almost unconscious swing of the hips. "Don't talk to me about history."

"All right," she said bitingly. "Let's stick to the wonderful future. Just tell me all about that."

Her taut voice broke slightly, but when Barron flicked his eyes at her she had drawn down a mask of composure. Her grey eyes were wide apart and clear. Even now they appeared almost untroubled.

Barron felt quick admiration for the courage that enabled her to look like that. She had shown it constantly, never giving in to the terror that surrounded them. It hadn't even deserted her in that sudden, nerve-screeching moment when the natives had spilled on to the river track. Twenty or more of them. Fierce, painted savages, naked but for their bark loincloths, hideously decked with nose skewers, amulets of human hair.

Confidence in numbers had been their undoing, and Barron had slammed a burst into them and got off the track while they were still clefting their axes. Jane Kingdom had acted swiftly on his orders, coolly working her rifle alongside him until the savages had withdrawn.

He remembered all that now, as though the momentary weakness in her voice had emphasized her record of courage. And remembering it, he was suddenly ashamed of his harshness.

"The future will be all right," he said quietly. "Just let me look after it."

"Let's both look after it," she said. "Because I'm a woman I don't claim special privileges."

Barron watched her guardedly. "Privileges? You're getting no privileges."

"Then why do I go first?"

"Because it's common sense. Together we haven't a chance."

"I know that," she said calmly. "So let's toss for places. Winner goes first."

Barron turned without answering and slammed a short, random burst of Tommy-gun fire into the undergrowth. Faced with her obstinacy, all his anger had come back. But now there was another quality, a dreadful emptiness against a background of fear; something he had never known before, something he only dimly understood.

He was a tall, hard-bodied man in his early thirties. He had been district officer for this part of Australian New Guinea for the past eight years. Ruler of a hundred miles of swamp and jungle each side of the Wampit, and back to the high inland mountains where the headhunting natives lived; judge, father and chastiser to some thousands of tribesmen.

But all the efficiency and calmness he had acquired were in danger of being stripped from him now as he thought of Jane Kingdom taken by the savages, her head on some uncouth lodge pole, her blonde hair plaited for a warrior's amulet. He looked at her, and she was so lovely she was an ache in his throat. His eyes narrowed and the muscles ridged along his jaw.

"Look," he said flatly. "I run this piece of territory. And that goes for you, too, while you're in it."

"The obvious thing to do is go now," she said, calmly ignoring his outburst. "Go together and risk it."

"Obvious, but stupid," Barron said. He crouched down behind the log and began reloading the Tommy-gun magazine.

"Ride this log down now and the native bowmen would make us look like pincushions. They'd catch up with us in no time."

"The river's fast. They could miss."

"There's twenty of them," Barron said. "Maybe more. They couldn't all miss."

"But if we got a start. . . ."

Barron snapped the magazine back into the Tommy gun. "It's at least an hour to the coast," he said, forcing himself into patience. "We'd need half an hour's start, and we'd never get it. They need a dissuader every ten minutes or they'll come looking for us." He made a sharp, urgent gesture with his right hand. "If I stay here, you can get clear. If we leave together now, we'll both die in the river."

"And at sundown?"

"They'll sneak in, but find nothing. You'll be

Continued on page 45

by A. H. WILLIAMS

Gordon Selfridge takes a last chance

His millions were gone; he was deep in debt. Already he had made one disastrous deal, and time was running out. With mystical faith, he staked £40,000 on a hunch

Selfridge aboard the Aquitania returning from a visit to America. In 1937 he went there to raise money—but he met with a cold reception

FOR Harry Gordon Selfridge, the American who set up his famous store in Edwardian London, and revolutionized shopping for British women, store business was his life; it absorbed the best in him. Farther down the line was his love of the theatre and beautiful women.

Soon after coming to London he was on friendly terms with some of the leading stars. With a few of them he maintained a close friendship until his death. Some of these friendships inevitably aroused speculation. Even today, nearly ten years after his death, I still hear what I believe to be fantastic stories of his extravagant gifts to famous actresses.

He got rid of £2 million between 1926 and 1935. Gaby Deslys, a French stage star, came too early in his life to enjoy the millions; but she took enough in diamonds to keep his memory green. How much she had from the store—and how the account was settled—can never be known. The two of them would often go to Oxford Street on Sundays, when only the firemen were on duty, and go through the store in a sense other than merely pedestrian. Her tastes were French, eclectic and all-embracing.

The period of big spending began with Selfridge's friendship with Jenny Dolly, when his love of gambling assumed a pathological form. From that time on there may have been occasional outside extravagances on other women whom he admired, but I do not remember one of outstanding importance. His devotion to Jenny seemed to me to be complete.

To play the part of Casanova is pretty well a full-time job. If nature had cast Selfridge in the part, life played him a dirty trick in making him a store man; for that was what he was, first and last. He had little time for anything else. Long absences from Oxford Street were rare.

In the store his sense of responsibility ruled him.

"How many people do you think seek responsibility, Williams?" he once asked. "I'd say less than five per cent. The majority of those who take responsibility have it thrust upon them. The rest steer clear of it."

Outside business he was acutely sensitive. In the early days of the Irish Sweepstake, we decided to invite people who had drawn a horse to lunch at the store on the day the Derby was run. After lunch they were to listen to the race, while Selfridge acted as host.

"Never again, Williams," he said, after it was all over. "I couldn't stand any more of it. I shall never forget the agony on the faces of those people as they were waiting to hear the results as to whether they were going to win a few hundred pounds or a fortune. The place was like a torture chamber. They were all in great torment. Life's cruel enough without that kind of thing."

His sensitiveness to people's feelings played some part in our decision to hold an exhibition of works of art which had been rejected by the Royal Academy. Such exhibitions are common enough today, but Selfridge was the first to think of the idea. Of course, there was also a business end to the exhibition: it brought visitors to Oxford Street.

The idea behind Selfridge's enthusiasm for television was not entirely commercial. He took a deep interest in the pioneer work of John Logie Baird and was the first to show to the general public Baird's original transmitter and receiver. I remember his remark when he saw it in action before it was exhibited. "This is not a toy, Williams. It is a link between all peoples in the world. Great good can come out of it."

When I left the store, in 1936, he was about eighty, and he had still four more years to run at Selfridge's. Yet, apart from weekends and an occasional holiday of a few weeks, he was always working, carrying the whole organization and shouldering new and complicated tasks as the years went on.

When we took over Whiteley's, he remarked to me casually: "This will mean more work, Williams. I shall have to start at half-past eight in the morning instead of at nine."

He did more: he worked in his office later at night and did not leave until the day's tasks

Jenny Dolly, the actress, was Gordon Selfridge's friend for many years. She shared with him a passion for gambling

had been completed. The real Gordon Selfridge was a man who was so dedicated to business that he never had time to learn how to handle leisure without wasting a fortune on illusions.

We who were in daily contact with him at the store knew when he was about to make one of his frequent journeys to France to play the tables and spend the weekend with his woman friend. He entered the office thawed out. The smile, normally never very ready, came easily. The word of praise, often withheld for tactical reasons, was breezily conferred. Business problems would be dismissed offhand.

One morning I was with him in such a mood when the telephone bell rang. It was a call from his friend in France, telling him not to come. Down went the telephone receiver with a bang, and instantly he was a changed personality. He froze before my eyes. For the rest of the day he strode between office and store, showering hot criticism all around him.

THE only man I knew who dared to address him by a nickname was James White, the financial wizard of the 1920s, who mopped up millions and killed himself when he lost the grimmest money battle of my time.

I first heard the nickname when Jimmy was leaving Selfridge's office. "Think it over, Pop," he said in a broad Lancashire accent.

I was shocked. Even to his closest business associates Selfridge was never anything more intimate than "Mr. Selfridge." He was "Harry" to his mother and wife. To us directors he was "The Chief" when we referred to him among ourselves, but always "Mr. Selfridge" to his face.

Like Selfridge, White always lived up to the limit of his enormous income and was, therefore, constantly on the lookout for easy thousands. The chance to make a few came when an eminent London surgeon consulted him.

The surgeon was the head of a family who had inherited two well-known London stores—Jones Bros., of Holloway, and John Barnes, of Finchley Road. He asked White whether he could arrange to sell the businesses.

White approached Selfridge about this. Selfridge had already engaged in land-buying operations at the back of the store. These had eaten up hundreds of thousands of pounds, and they undoubtedly had some bearing on his personal crash in the late 1930s. At that time he was widely condemned for indulging in land speculation, but since then his purchases have risen enormously in value. Only recently one section was sold for £1,000,000.

White was a persuasive negotiator, and the Jones Bros.-John Barnes deal went through quickly. It was an important purchase, for it

Gordon Selfridge with his daughter and son-in-law, Princess and Prince Wiasemsky, and his granddaughter, Tatiana. Below: An early photograph of Violette, another of his daughters

became a pillar of the Selfridge Provincial Stores which absorbed Cole Bros. of Sheffield, George Henry Lee of Liverpool, A. H. Bull of Reading, Trewin Bros. of Watford, Holdrons of Peckham, Pratts of Streatham, besides other businesses at St. Albans and Gloucester.

IT was during the Jones Bros.-John Barnes discussions that White suddenly put a question to Selfridge: "Who owns the Ordinary Shares of your business here, Pop?"

"I do."

"What—the lot? Well, what are you thinking about? What are they worth?"

"I estimate their value at something approaching three million pounds."

"Well, you can put that amount in your pocket and still control the business. What you ought to do is to form a trust."

Under White's inspiration the Gordon Selfridge Trust was formed with a £3 million capital. Into the trust went Selfridge's ordinary shares as equity, and within twenty-four hours the issue was over-subscribed. Upwards of £2 million finally found its way into Selfridge's pocket.

White and Selfridge were an extraordinary pair, widely different in every respect, except for their love of gambling. The rough-hewn Lancashire lad, a former bricklayer's labourer who had climbed up the ladder with a hod full of gold, was indifferent to personal dignity. The American was a model of good breeding and self-restraint. White rasped out orders and anecdotes in the style of a music-hall comedian: Selfridge hated loud display and common slang.

Yet they fused. White was no doubt shrewd enough to put his finger on Selfridge's weak spots—his personal vanity and his desire to win admiration, which led him into such ruinous follies outside the store.

White had a confidential secretary, a small, bullet-headed man named Smith. One afternoon while I was having tea with White in his office, he wanted to refer to some documents.

"Smithy!" he bawled.

The small man was in the office like a flash.

"I want such-and-such documents," White said. "Can you remember where they are?"

Smith hesitated for some seconds. Then he groped for words: "I—I—"

White jumped out of his chair and strode towards the secretary. Down smashed his clenched fist on the bullet-head, again and again. "Use it, use it!" he yelled. And the fist crashed down in a final blow. The small man did not flinch. He was obviously used to this sort of medicine. White returned to his chair, breathless with anger, his blue eyes blazing. Then he shot out a stream of bad language.

What, I thought, can Selfridge have in common with this vulgarian—Selfridge, who seldom raised his voice, and who would have considered it beneath his dignity to enter into a violent dispute with a paid employee? The answer was, of course, business, the pursuit of money and power. It was to bring them even closer together in one of the rashest deals that Selfridge ever made.

One Friday night, shortly before the store closed, Selfridge called us directors together and said: "Don't go home. I am going over to Lansdowne House to see Jimmy. Stay around. I may have news for you."

Later, I learned what had happened.

A few weeks previously, White had called upon

Jimmy White, a bricklayer's labourer who became a millionaire, led Gordon Selfridge into one of his rashest deals

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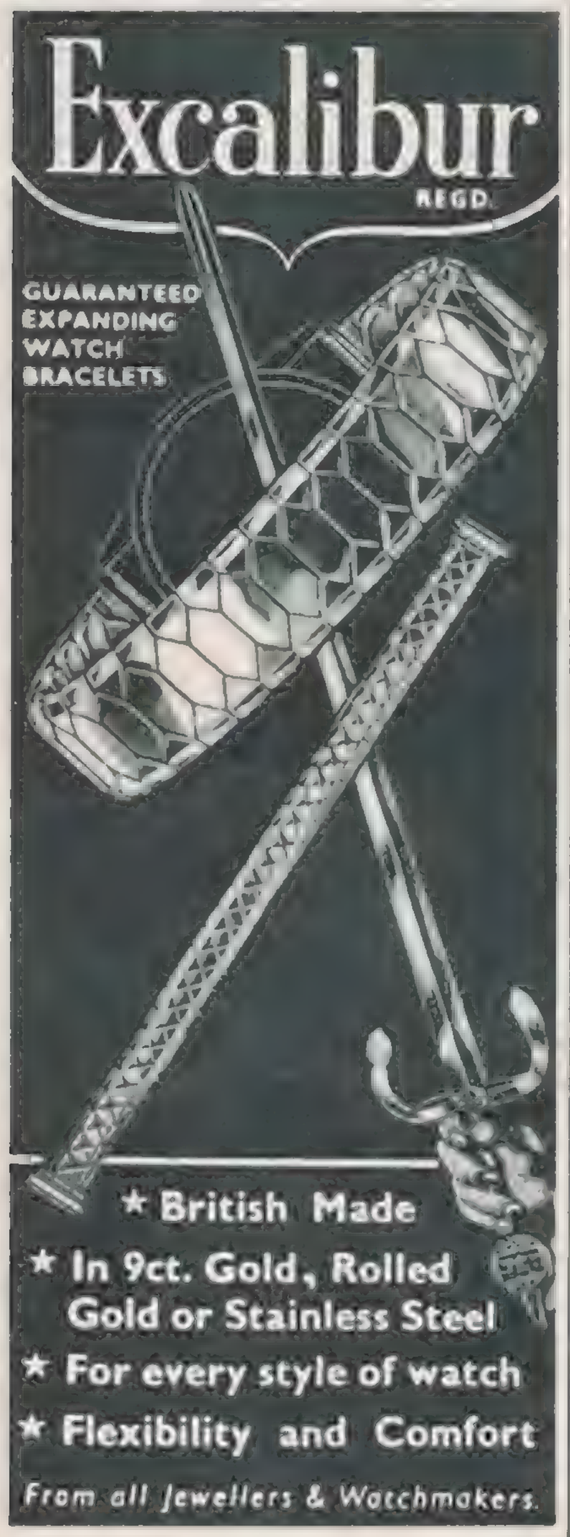
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Selfridge and told him that Whiteley's, another London store, might be buyable.

And he shot the arrow which, I think, transfixed Selfridge to the deal.

"Think, Pop," he said enthusiastically. "The youngest storeman in London buys out the oldest storeman! What about that? Isn't it something to go after?"

Now here we were, in our offices above the dark store, waiting for a call from the chief.

It came at about nine o'clock. We bundled into taxis and went to Lansdowne House. Somebody rang the bell. The door opened, and instead of the butler, there stood Selfridge himself.

This had never happened before. Nor had I ever seen him in such an excited state.

"Boys," he exclaimed, as we filed into the hall, "boys, we've got it!"

This was the first and last time he ever addressed his directors as "boys." I wondered what was coming. If I had known, I should have been less impressed by the greeting "boys" than by the three subsequent words—"we've got it!" For we certainly got it, but not in the sense that Selfridge implied. Three other words should have been added—"in the neck."

For this Whiteley deal was carried through on the most fantastic business terms. Selfridge had agreed to guarantee a dividend of over twenty per cent to the shareholders, if they agreed to transfer their shares to the new company. But the business simply could not make such profits.

The only gainer from the deal was White. His rake-off, I heard, ran into five figures. I saw him only infrequently after the Whiteley affair; but I saw quite a lot of Selfridge and the load of trouble he was carrying as the result of Jimmy's magical slogan.

In 1936 I retired from Selfridge's. For ten years I had been a director and, from that position, had latterly watched the shadows lengthening over Gordon Selfridge. I had spent the best years of my life in his service, and the break was a wrench.

To many outside the board room, all was well. The slump of the early 1930s was over; business was fairly good. But, as I saw it, the future of the store was bound up with the future of Selfridge himself.

The outside world still regarded him as a millionaire. He lived like one: and, although he was now an old man, there were no visible signs of failing powers. The retail business world was, however, better informed, and there was speculation as to how long he could retain his personal hold on the company's affairs. . . .

SELFRIDGE was not in the ordinary sense a superstitious man, but there was a strong mystical streak in him. He believed, for instance, in the power of will, mystically projected. He thought it possible by such projection to influence people without personal contact.

Often, after the store closed in the evening, he would order his chauffeur, Norris, to drive him slowly through the streets of London.

He once described one of these journeys to me.

"I drove through Fulham, Williams. All those houses! What goes on inside them? What sort of people live there? Norris drives the car at walking pace. This enables me to look into the houses and catch sight of some of the people in them.

"Last night I saw a woman with three little children in one of the houses. I could see at once that it was a happy family. Not too much money, but enough. Somewhere in the background was a contented husband, proud of his wife and family, glad to give them all that is in his power to give.

"*She ought to shop at Selfridge's,* I thought.

"So I concentrated all the force of my will through the window. It may mean another customer, Williams."

He seemed to believe in a sort of mystical deliverance from trouble. This belief was so deep that as far as I know he made no provision for his old age: he carried no insurances and had no

"You'll feel better after a nice bowl of hot soup. Slip down to the grocer and fetch a couple of tins"

nest-egg to draw upon when his income from the company dried up.

He had an almost mystical belief that the Coronation of George VI in 1937 would help to extricate him from the financial difficulties which were now threatening to overwhelm him. He saw in the pomp of the occasion not only an unrivalled opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of showmanship—to "stun London"—and bring much business to the store, but also to vindicate himself to financial forces which were already closing in and restricting his field of operations.

He was realistic enough to know, however, that increasing business alone could provide sufficient dividends on his shares to enable him to reduce substantially his debt to the company, which at this time stood at about £118,000.

There were as yet no outward indications of his unstable personal position. Some of his associates who were aware of his heavy debt to the company shared his confidence that it would ultimately be liquidated.

His personal expenditure was still high. He had given up the tenancy of Lansdowne House just before I left him, and moved to Carlton House Terrace, one of the most expensive residential quarters in London. There he entertained on a good scale.

When he told me—this was after I had left the store—that the Coronation decorations would cost over £40,000, I thought he was taking a big risk, for there were all sorts of hazards to be calculated. But he always took risks; that was his nature.

But there was something about the forthcoming Coronation that was in the nature of an anti-climax. I wondered whether Selfridge was aware of it; most business men were, though they were not able to put their finger on the trouble. For some weeks trade had fallen far below expectations.

What I did not grasp at the time was Gordon Selfridge's personal entanglement. In the Coronation he saw a way—perhaps the only way—to straighten out his affairs with the company. I have no doubt at all that this blurred his judgment and that wishful thinking drove him into what proved to be a thoroughly unsound speculation.

For the business community of London did not greatly benefit by the Coronation. One of the chief reasons for this was the comparatively small number of foreign visitors.

Selfridge's suffered in common with other businesses. But the biggest disappointment to Gordon Selfridge himself must have been the failure of his £40,000 decorations to "stun London." If there was any stunning it was not reflected in the numbers that entered the store and bought goods, and this was the whole purpose of the display.

And this failure, in my opinion, made the crash inevitable. He had gambled and lost. Now he was nearing the last of his resources. The end of his control of the store was merely a matter of time.

In 1937, Selfridge applied for British naturalization papers. He had still ten years to live, but his active business life had not long to run. I am convinced that he knew it, and that his application for British nationality was a desperate attempt to prolong it. As soon as the naturalization formalities were completed, he obtained a British passport and left for the United States.

HIS reputation there was legendary. He was the Middle West boy who had conquered Britain. He had revolutionized commercial life here by methods learned in the United States.

Now he was looking for financial aid for future schemes; but he was living in a dream world, playing with resources which he did not possess. He was banking on a personal reputation that commercial intelligence in the United States knew to be without financial substance.

In New York he made contact with a famous financial house, where for the first time in his life he was coldly received. He was hurt to think, he wrote to a friend in London, that men who had once been so friendly should now behave like suspicious strangers and withdraw their confidence from him.

From New York he went to Chicago, where his business life had begun. From that city also came a letter to his London friend, couched in bitter terms. His old friends had let him down. He was going on to the coast.

A friend informs me that Selfridge suddenly appeared in Hollywood in the autumn of 1937.

"I was lunching on the Twentieth Century-Fox lot," writes this friend, "when Gordon Selfridge entered the restaurant accompanied by a glamorous French film star."

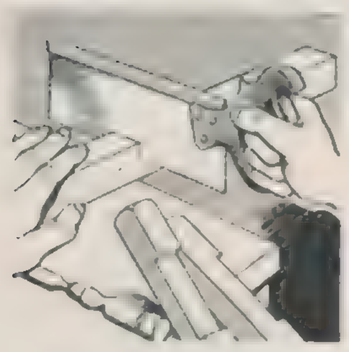
The first outward sign of a decline in Selfridge's financial position came when he left Carlton House Terrace and moved into a flat in Brook House, Park Lane. I had been away from the store for two years and was not aware of any new development.

I was disturbed when I heard of his move, because I could not fit the Selfridge I knew into a flat—not even a flat in Park Lane. For a flat would be a drastic change in his mode of living.

Next time I saw him he talked on nothing more grave than the Selfridge

KIA-ORA for Christmas
KIA-ORA
Orange
KIA-ORA
SUNCRUSH
Fruit
Squash
SUNCRUSH
made from
the whole
fruit

Make yourself at home



WHEN we moved into a new house recently, we found that the smallest bedroom would not accommodate our children's two single beds. I converted them into a double bunk. I bought four stout posts five feet high, and then removed the iron bed frames and corner brackets from the two beds. After screwing the brackets on to the posts at a suitable height, I strengthened the structure with cross planking. I shaped the long side pieces to allow sufficient headroom, and utilized the space beneath the lower bunk by fitting a blanket cupboard.—*J. T. Charles, Margate, Kent.*

Information Bureau, of which he was very proud. Like so many others of his free services to the public, it was the first of its kind in London.

"Did you know, Williams, that government departments are still asking Miss Chapman"—who ran the Bureau—"for information concerning their own departmental affairs?"

All through this meeting he was his usual masterly, incisive self. He showed no sign of strain. His fist came down on the desk as vigorously as ever.

After that I saw him only occasionally. I once visited him at Brook House, and was struck by the charm of his rooms. But his restricted social life was, as I had feared, a consequence of the mounting crisis in his financial affairs.

We were in the first autumn of the second World War. In Oxford Street it was business as usual; nothing had altered. The war was still far away and the blitz which was to destroy so much that Gordon Selfridge loved was only a vague fear.

He showed not a trace of trouble; yet he was up to his neck in it. And he must have known there was no way out. For by this time his future had already been decided by the interests which had come to the conclusion that control must be taken away from him.

His personal follies, destructive though they were of his private fortune, were only in part responsible for the long drawn-out tragedy of his closing years. Follies apart, the crisis which brought him down was, in my opinion, chiefly the result of business conditions and hazards that even his foresight and insight could not predict.

He owed little or nothing outside the company, and when the crash came there were no creditors to drag him into the bankruptcy court.

The company's affairs during the critical period in the months following the outbreak of the second World War were serious enough to arouse considerable speculation in the distributive trade. Rumours concerning Selfridge's personal position had been circulating for a long time, and they may have had some effect on the company's trading position.

I HAVE no knowledge as to when the decision was taken to remove Gordon Selfridge from control, but I should think it must have been in the early part of 1940, when trade was at a low ebb and when there was no discernible hope of the chairman ever ridding himself of personal debt.

Some of the directors had, I think, little to do with the final decision: that was reached by financial authorities outside the store. Selfridge himself had no inkling of it until he was confronted by an ultimatum.

Put bluntly, these were the terms:

That Gordon Selfridge should retire from the chairmanship and board of the company, and relinquish all control of the company's affairs. In return for this he would assume the title of president, without executive authority or, indeed, any defined duties, and accept a salary of £2,000 a year, subject to tax. The alternative was that the company would demand immediate repayment of the £118,000 which he owed to it.

That would mean bankruptcy. . . .

In the seven years of life that remained to Gordon Selfridge there is no record of a single word of recrimination.

Shortly after the blow fell, he outlined to me a proposal for a new business enterprise.

"I see a great future," he said, "for a chain of stores devoted exclusively to women's goods. I shall enter into manufacturing arrangements to produce models in good materials on a mass scale, so that I shall be able to sell at a price that no competitor can touch."

He then proceeded to throw out ideas on publicity and sales technique, to open up new lines of approach to the feminine imagination, to describe new shop designs which would give the best facilities for the display of goods. It was not merely an old man's repetition of past triumphs; he had something new and creative, which has since been successfully exploited by a big chain-store concern.

But the only capital he possessed was confidence, which might, indeed, at a more favourable time, have launched him on another great enterprise. But there was a world war still to be fought and won; no one could predict its course or duration with certainty. What chance had a broken merchant prince of re-establishing himself at such a time? He had no chance, and all his friends knew it. . . .

As president of the company, Gordon Selfridge still occupied a position of prestige, if not of power. He did not attend board meetings; no directors visited his office to receive instructions; and his tours of inspection became less and less frequent, until they finally ceased. The flow of business papers to and from his desk dried up. His secretaries were transferred to other duties.

It was a harrowing situation but it made no visible impression on Selfridge himself. He kept office hours punctiliously and gravely acknowledged the uneasy courtesies of the staff as he passed in and out of the building.

Inevitably the time came when they had to ask him to vacate his office, and, when he still persisted in coming, tell him that they had decided to reconstruct part of the store and that the office would be pulled down.

He was offered another office on the other side of Oxford Street. He accepted it and was there daily until war conditions, and perhaps weariness of spirit, made his visits to the West End less frequent.

He had by this time left the flat in Brook House, Park Lane, and was living at Ross Court, Putney Heath, with his daughter, Rosalie, Princess Wiasemsky.

There was no motor car to carry him between Putney Heath and the West End. He travelled usually by bus, and from time to time friends told me they had seen him in queues in Oxford Street, waiting to board a bus to get home in the twilight before the air raid sirens began to wail. His theatre-going days were over, but he spent hours in the cinemas, sometimes queueing for the cheaper seats, alone and unrecognized.

TOWARDS the end of the war I ran into him in the West End. His appearance shocked me. His clothes were seedy and needed brushing; he had ceased to take an interest in such things. Although he still carried himself very erect, I got the impression of failing powers. We talked trivialities, for he seemed disinclined to touch on matters that would recall our old business association. His visits to the West End, which continued until he was in his ninetieth year, must have darkened his spirit by forcing him into contrasts between past and present.

But for his pride, and his confidence that he would be able to overcome the final crisis in his affairs, he might have retired from London and found peace in the English countryside he loved so well.

And finally that is where it all ended, at Highcliffe, Hampshire, in the small churchyard where he was laid to rest, beside his mother and his wife, on a May day in 1947.

THE END

"No Name On The Door," by A. H. Williams, is published by W. H. Allen & Co. at 18s.

Can we steal the sun's key to power?

Continued from page 13

hydrogen we must raise it to enormous heat.

This is exactly what the sun and the stars do. The temperature of the surface of the sun is about one million degrees centigrade, and the temperature of the centre may be 20 million degrees centigrade. Such temperatures can only be reached on earth, on any large scale, in an atomic explosion. That is why, so far, we have only been able to fuse hydrogen in a great explosion. We can make a hydrogen bomb work because we can get the hydrogen hot enough to fuse by setting it off with an atomic bomb.

Some people have doubted whether we shall ever be able to control the process of fusion. President Peron once claimed that an Austrian scientist had done so in the Argentine, and the claim was promptly found to be false. From time to time there were mysterious hints from the atomic energy authorities in Britain and America, but they gave no clue to a possible method. Above all, how was a process working at several million degrees to be contained? What could the apparatus be made of? No material on earth could stand up to these temperatures.

The first answer to these questions came this spring, when Malenkov visited this country. Among those who came with him from Russia was Professor I. V. Kurchatov, and when Malenkov visited Harwell, Professor Kurchatov offered to give a lecture. The lecture turned out to be about experiments in controlled fusion.

In these experiments, heavy hydrogen was contained in a narrow tube with an electric terminal at each end. Huge electric currents were then passed between these terminals: currents as high as two million ampères at 50,000 volts. These currents were like lightning flashes; they lasted only a few millionths of a second.

The Russians had hoped that these currents would fuse a little of the heavy hydrogen, and their first results had seemed encouraging. Later they had found that they were mistaken, and when Professor Kurchatov spoke, he made it clear that they had got no fusion. But the experiments that he described were still fascinating because they gave the first clue to the way in which temperatures of millions of degrees might be contained.

This is the clue. When the Russians passed these huge currents through the tube, the paths of the currents drew themselves together down the middle of the tube. In this way, the great heat was concentrated in the middle of the tube and insulated from the material of the tube. Atoms of heavy hydrogen were forced together by the electric current in the middle of the tube, in the way shown roughly in the picture on page 13. And although fusion did not take place, this is a way in which it might take place, with its great heat insulated safely from the containing vessel.

The future will show whether hydrogen can be fused in this way, by electric discharges. If it can, then each discharge will be a very small explosion—as it were, a pinhead hydrogen bomb. The discharges would be very short, and each tiny explosion would last only some millionths of a second. They would be rather like the explosions in a petrol engine, but shorter and much more powerful. An engine to use this method of fusion might therefore be made like a very large petrol engine. There would be a number of tubes or cylinders, each fired in turn, so that the sequence of explosions would drive the engine as a petrol engine is driven.

This speculation may be prophetic or it may turn out to be mistaken. We cannot yet tell. It may be that fusion can be controlled in this way, or it may turn out that this is not practical. In short, how fusion will be controlled is still in doubt. But there is now no doubt that a way can be found to control it. It will take many years yet, but it will be done. And when it has been done, mankind will enter an age of power that has not been dreamed of.

There will be no limit to the energy that we can command, and we shall turn the tap for it with no more thought of the cost than when we now turn the tap for water. The effect on the lives of people everywhere will be profound.

The men who will make this revolution, the men who are at work on it now, have asked themselves, at every step, the two questions with which we began. What is the world made of? It is made, essentially, of hydrogen; this is the stuff of creation.

And how is it put together? It is put together by fusion; this is the process in which man is about to follow the creative genius of Nature. THE END

Smart girl . . .

gave him a

Gillette 'Rocket' set

Smart man!

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CARPETS & RUGS

BLACKWOOD MORTON KILMARNOCK

The small woman

Continued from page 17

also necessary. A mule train clip-clopped slowly down the street. The muleteer was obviously tired, lagging a yard or two behind his lead animal. Aylward, the five-foot tiger, waited tensed and poised in the doorway.

So enthusiastic was her leap that its momentum carried her past the mule's head and into full view of the muleteer. In the half light he recognized her at once as a "foreign devil" and screamed in terror, but he had the lead rein firmly tied to his wrist.

Gladys, recovering her balance, jerked at the mule's head and found herself borne into the courtyard astride the glad nose of the weary beast, the muleteer being dragged in along with his team. Hoofs struck sharply on the flagstones, steam rose from their flanks; they gathered in a tired group.

Gladys had captured a mule train single-handed, but only one man. The others had all fled.

At that moment, Jeannie and Chang came out of the kitchen.

"Well done!" said Jeannie, hopping with delight. "Indeed, well done!"

That did it: the muleteer had regarded Gladys with awe; but the sight of the white-haired spirit advancing on him was too much. He tore the lead rein from his wrist with a shriek, bolted from the courtyard.

"Now look what you've done!" wailed Gladys. "At least we had one man. Now you've frightened him away, too."

Jeannie Lawson clapped her on the back. "Don't worry, they dare not leave these mules; they're much too valuable. They'll be back, you'll see."

Chang was dispatched to find the muleteers, reassure them and bring them to the inn.

TEN minutes later he returned, and one dubious Chinese crept fearfully into the courtyard after him. Chang had explained that the "foreign devil" ladies offered clean accommodation, good food and, as an extra attraction, stories which were to be told free of charge, inclusive, for a cheap price of two *cash* a night. Where else in the whole province of Shansi could he expect such a bargain?

The muleteer fetched his fellows. They unfastened the packs, watered and fed the tired animals, and went into the large downstairs room where the heated *k'ang* filled the entire length of one wall. Chang brought in a steaming cauldron of food and slopped it into their basins. They ate hungrily and agreed that it was good food, but when Jeannie Lawson and Gladys entered there was a perceptible movement towards the farthest corner of the room.

Jeannie was unabashed. She had her audience. "Don't be afraid," she said cheerfully. "I want to tell you a story which you will enjoy. All the stories we tell at the Inn of Eight Happinesses are free." The men looked a little more interested, and Jeannie perched herself on the stool she had brought in with her. "The story I am going to tell you tonight concerns a man called Jesus Christ. He lived long ago in a far away country called Palestine. . . ."

When the reputation of the inn was established, more often than not the courtyard was filled with six or seven teams of mules, and the three *k'angs* were packed; but in the early weeks practically all their clients were hauled bodily into the courtyard by Gladys.

Learning the Chinese language was also, she discovered, a slow business, but Chang was a willing teacher. He led her round the kitchen identifying articles by their Chinese names and making her repeat them after him. Gladys learned some of the Bible stories in Chinese by heart, and relieved Mrs. Lawson from time to time at the evening story-telling.

Even Chang insisted on taking a turn, although at first he was inclined to get his religious relationships confused. On two occasions, they discovered him describing enthusiastically how Jesus Christ put all His animals

"I can't come out. With Christmas so near I have to do as I'm told"

aboard an Ark and sailed to safety across the flood waters to Bethlehem.

Gladys was happy, even though at times Jeannie Lawson, hotblooded, dogmatic and getting on in years, was a little difficult to live with. In the immense terrain of China, solitudes which reached north, south, east and west, across thousands of miles of loneliness, the faith in which she believed seemed clearer and more forceful.

She began also to understand the muleteers, the carriers and the coolies. They had dark tanned faces, shocks of blue-black hair, narrow slitted eyes; many of them tall, like most northern Chinese, sinewy and strong. They were contented, simple people. At the end of the day a bowl of food, a place on the warm brick bed were all they desired.

After six weeks' or three months' travelling they returned to a wife, children and a small home at either end of the trail. Often they stayed there for several weeks.

A little like sailors, this possession of a wife at both ends of the trail: two wives, two families, two homes was the normal domestic situation of the average muleteer. Often one wife would send a small gift to the other; perhaps a gift for a newly born child. The wives never met.

IN Yangcheng Gladys found life an immense and endless adventure. The pastoral mountain background was so broad and vivid; she was not merely an observer, an interested traveller passing across an alien landscape; she was an integral part of the whole, and this realization was a source of endless satisfaction to her. Until Jeannie Lawson quarrelled with her, she was fully and completely absorbed with her way of living.

The quarrel was absurd, no more than a slight difference of opinion. By now, after nearly eight months at the Inn of Eight Happinesses, Gladys was accustomed to Jeannie's quick outbursts of spleen. Usually she could circumvent them, keeping out of the way until they had boiled over and evaporated.

Jeannie liked to go out for a walk every afternoon. More often than not Gladys went too, but she was trying desperately to become proficient in the Chinese language; she spent several hours a day at it. On this occasion, when Jeannie Lawson asked her to come for a walk, Gladys begged to be excused; she wanted to go on studying Chinese. Mrs. Lawson flew immediately into a rage.

The harsh words came out in a cataract. If Gladys couldn't bother to come for a walk, then she needn't bother to stay there. As far as she was concerned, Gladys could leave and the sooner the better. In fact she could leave right that minute. Indeed, she would help her to leave. She stormed

Walk down this little courtyard
with its fountain and its flowers.
Press this bell. We are calling on
the Princess Vittorio Massimo.
Young and beautiful,
quick as a dragonfly.
Now you shall see why Chaplin
has captured her
for his *King in New York* . . .

Good evening. Are we early?

You're late-ish, you know. But so was I. Come in and celebrate.

With? . . .

Oh please, anything you like! I shall choose Martini. And not such a very small glass, either.

Straight Martini? Perfect!

Now I'm beginning to take to you. Sweet? With ice? Good. You know, that's how we serve it in Italy . . .

We?

Of course! In Rome . . . when I'm feeling more Irish than usual. In America . . . when I'm feeling Italian. In England . . . when I'm feeling tired after a long day at the studio. It's unfailing. Who shall we drink to?

To a certain Princess in Belgravia . . .
in a cool, golden Martini
à la Dawn Addams!

Better drink MARTINI Sweet or Dry

DEWAR'S

IS THE SCOTCH

—IT NEVER VARIES

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out and returned with an armful of Gladys's possessions which she proceeded to throw at her.

Weeping, Gladys fled to Chang and hid in his kitchen. Together they crouched there and listened to the tirade, while odd garments were flung down into the courtyard.

Chang was very concerned. Like all Chinese, he respected old age, and Jeannie Lawson was old enough to receive ancestral treatment.

"Perhaps it is better you do as she demands," he advised. "Leave us for a little while. Go back to Tsehchow and visit the mission there. Those ladies will be glad to give you a little holiday. Stay there for a time and then return. She will send for you after a day or two; of that I am certain. The old one will have forgotten her rage and we shall be happy again."

"But how can I get there?" sobbed Gladys. "It's two days' journey. I can't walk all that distance."

"I will arrange with a friend of mine to provide a mule and a man to go with you," said Chang.

"All right," said Gladys. "I'll go."

She seized a suitcase and packed her few things into it. Chang carried it to the gate with her and down the street to his friend who owned a mule. For a few *cash* the bargain was struck. Dolefully, Gladys hoisted herself aboard the mule. It was a sad journey. Not even old Mrs. Smith at Tsehchow Mission could cheer her up.

Three days later, in the early morning, a messenger arrived. He gabbled excitedly to Mrs. Smith; Gladys could

HUSBANDS—1

A bad husband cannot be a good man.

Proverb

see her brow furrow as she listened. She looked a little agitated.

"The story seems quite silly," she said, "but it looks as if Jeannie's had an accident. He says that Jeannie Lawson is somewhere on the road, and —and——"

"And what?" cried Gladys in a voice full of apprehension.

"That she's dying," concluded Mrs. Smith.

"But where?" cried Gladys, distraught. "Where is she? I must go to her."

In quick phrases Mrs. Smith cross-examined the man. He shrugged his shoulders. He was simply repeating something that had been passed forward by relays of disinterested and not very accurate messengers.

Gladys was in tears. "It's my fault," she wept. "I shouldn't have left her. I must go back at once."

"Now don't upset yourself, my dear," said Mrs. Smith gently. "We'll get you a mule and someone to go with you, and you can go off and find her at once."

For a second time Gladys scurried round, gathering her possessions together. Astride her mule, she jogged out through the gateway and turned to wave goodbye to Mrs. Smith. As she passed him, the gateman took off his straw hat and clapped it on her head.

"You will never keep hope if the sun beats on your brain," he called. "Good luck!"

From the garbled report which had reached Tsehchow, Gladys knew that Jeannie Lawson had left Yangcheng and had gone into the mountains. It was no use, therefore, returning to that city, so she and the muleteer took a side trail, detouring through walled villages, asking everywhere for news of the old lady. No one had any word of her.

On the fourth day it was getting dark and they were approaching the small walled town of Chin Shui. They had made a wide circle around Yangcheng and were now returning to the main mule trail farther on. They passed a man leaving the city and repeated the question they had asked a hundred times. Yes, he had heard of this old foreign one. She was lying very ill in Chin Shui at an inn. She was probably dead by now.

They hurried on into the city. They had no trouble finding the inn where the "foreign devil" lay. It was current gossip among the townspeople. They passed through the inn door and there, in the open courtyard under the balcony, they found Jeannie Lawson. She was lying near a heap of coal against a wall. She was black with blood and coal dust and at first Gladys thought she was dead. But when she ran to her, crying, "Jeannie, Jeannie!" the woman turned her head slightly. Her lips moved.

"Is that you, Gladys?" she whispered. "Thank God, you've come!"

Tears streamed down the girl's face as she tried to make her more comfortable. It was almost dark. She stood up and shouted imperiously: "Bring lanterns so I can see. Bring lanterns at once, d'you hear!"

The servants of the inn came scurrying at the scolding of this second "foreign devil." The globes of lighted paper lanterns went bobbing through the darkness. They brought hot water. Gladys bathed Jeannie's open cuts and, little by little, coaxed the story from the half-delirious woman.

Apparently, still in her temper, she left the inn in the charge of Chang, hired a mule and set off westwards the day after Gladys's departure. She arrived at this old inn and hired a room upstairs. In the darkness she walked out on to the balcony. She put out her hand to lean on the balustrade which in Yangcheng fenced off the upper balcony. But there was no balustrade; it had rotted away long ago. Overbalancing, she pitched forwards and downwards, crashing heavily on to the pile of coal twenty feet below.

She appeared to have injured her spine, for the slightest movement racked her with pain. Her scream as she fell had brought the Chinese in the inn running to her assistance. They lifted her off the heap of coal and placed her under the veranda. They did not know what else to do, and the old lady, dazed with shock and pain, could not tell them.

That she was dying, Gladys was prepared to believe. The nearest European doctor was six days' journey away at Luan, and in Jeannie Lawson's condition and at her age it was unthinkable that she could stand the journey.

For six weeks Gladys stayed in the inn and scarcely left Jeannie alone for a minute. Her condition hardly seemed to improve at all. The wounds healed, but she was still in pain, and at times she seemed mentally deranged. At the end of six weeks Gladys decided that somehow or other she *had* to get her to the hospital at Luan.

She hired two mules and secured a thick quilt between them. She packed it with straw, and put bedding on top for Jeannie. With an attendant muleteer she set off on the long journey to Luan. On each of the next two evenings they stayed at Chinese inns on the mule trail, and at each halt Gladys supervised the removal of

WINNER OF COVER CONTEST NO. 8

MR. J. A. HOCKLEY, of 32A Aboyne Drive, West Wimbledon, London, S.W.20, has won £100 in JOHN BULL'S cover contest No. 8. His title for Batchelor's painting of the sitter-in watching television (November 10) is VIEWING FIGURES UP AGAIN.

the sick woman. They came to Yangcheng and found that Chang was still managing the inn with success.

At Luan, Jeannie Lawson was admitted to the hospital at once. There was an English doctor working in the wards and two British nursing sisters. For four weeks more Gladys stayed with Jeannie, living in a room at the hospital.

The doctor was quite frank with her. "She has injured her spine, I'm afraid, and there is little we can do for her."

ONE afternoon Gladys sat by her friend's bedside and held her hand. It was one of Jeannie's moments of lucidity. Impulsively she whispered: "Oh, Gladys, let's go back to Yangcheng. Please take me home."

"I'll take you home today, Jeannie," Gladys said, gently. "I'll go and see about the mule litter now."

They set off three hours later.

Chang was pleased to see them back. Gladys did not realize they now had so many friends—many people turned out to meet them. Jeannie was happier, but her condition grew slowly worse. In November she died.

The weeks following Jeannie Lawson's death were among the most precarious that Gladys ever experienced in China. She was saved from possible disaster by two of the unlikeliest people: a cook and a mandarin.

Chang laid Jeannie into her coffin and sealed her down, and because it was a solemn and Christian occasion he induced an old man who owned a plate camera in the city to come and take a picture. In the courtyard, with the muleteers and neighbours and the converts and a few odd children all anxious to have their photograph taken, they assembled decorously around the coffin of the "old one."

Gladys sent the picture home to her mother in Edmonton.

Now she discussed their financial position with Chang. Their rent was paid for a year. The few *cash* they earned every night from the muleteers just about covered their overheads, but there was no margin of profit and hardly a livelihood. Still, the Mission was in being and Gladys had no intention of abandoning the inn until she was forced to. Her Chinese was improving daily; she was now fairly fluent.

Shortly after Jeannie's death, Chang conceived the idea of Gladys going to pay her respects to the Mandarin of Yangcheng.

"But why?" she demanded. "The mandarin doesn't want to see me. I don't particularly want to see him."

"But your time of mourning is over," insisted Chang. "You should put on your best clothes and pay your respects to him. It is necessary."

"But I've never met a mandarin in my life," protested Gladys. "I don't know what to say to him. How many times do you bow? Who speaks first? You go and find out these things and I'll consider it—but I can't afford a new robe to go in, anyway."

Chang shuffled off into the city and returned an hour later looking very crestfallen. Nobody, apparently, knew the laws governing a "foreign devil" woman's mode of conduct when meeting the mandarin. Everybody else from coolie to government official was covered by firm protocol; there were so many bows, so many obeisances. But Gladys was a strange species. Chang sighed, and explained that obviously a special law would have to be passed for her and, until it was, she obviously could not be granted any audience with the mandarin. It was regrettable, but for the time being she would have to remain that unrespected and inferior being—a woman.

The Mandarin of Yangcheng was a powerful figure. In that part of mountainous Southern Shansi, the chief city was Tsehchow. Several days' journey away, grouped in a rough circle around the capital, were four smaller sister cities: Yangcheng, Chin Shui, Kaoping and Lingchuan, tiny walled citadels nestling in the high mountains. The Mandarin of Yangcheng ruled his city and district by decree from the governor and war lord at Taiyuen, the capital of Shansi, far to the north. The government at Taiyuen owed nominal allegiance to the Nationalists.

Yangcheng lay deep in the mountains. News travelled only as fast as a man could walk. The mandarin commanded the power of freedom or imprisonment, life and death over all his subjects around him. In a feudal society he was an absolute lord and treated with obeisance. That he should make the first move towards the strange woman who had elected to live in his capital was, therefore, all the more surprising.

GLADYS was busy in an upstairs room when she heard the commotion in the courtyard. She looked over the balustrade to see Chang running for the outer door. At the gate he turned and shouted up to her:

"The mandarin is coming! The mandarin is coming!" He sounded very frightened; she saw his pigtails swing as he disappeared through the gate. It was the last she saw of him for three hours. Although Chang had been insistent that she should meet the mandarin, his own courage failed him completely when it came to the act.

Gladys patted her hair into place, and ran down the stairs and into the courtyard just as the retinue began to troop in. Coolies bore the sedan chair, curtained against prying eyes. Around it were grouped the mandarin's clerks while, gathered at a respectful distance, were other retainers, a backcloth of spectacular, learned-looking gentlemen with ivory faces, tight skull caps and almond eyes.

A clerk stepped forward and carefully opened the door of the chair, his arm proffered to help the mandarin

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out. The mandarin was tall, with black hair and an ivory face. His wide-sleeved gown fell smoothly to pointed black shoes, his long glossy queue hung down his back.

His eyes caught hers and she closed her open mouth and gulped, bowing low. When she came up, he was standing looking down at her with a faintly worried expression on his face.

"I come to ask your advice," he said at last. "You are aware that for many generations the custom of foot-binding has been practised in this province?"

"Has it?" she murmured. His Chinese was pure and beautifully flowery. She felt pleased with herself that she had no difficulty in understanding him.

"The feet of females are bound soon after they are born," he said. "Now we have received a decree from the Central Government that all foot-binding must cease immediately. Every woman in this province has bound feet. Therefore, someone with big feet, unbound feet, must undertake inspection. It must be a woman. You have friends in the outside provinces who would know of such a woman. Will you write to them and ask them if they could send such a woman for this purpose?"

"I will do that with pleasure," said Gladys automatically.

"It is not a well-paid position," explained the mandarin. "The wages will be one measure of millet a day and a farthing to buy vegetables. A mule will be supplied to journey out to the lonely villages and a guard of two soldiers will accompany the female. You will find such a woman for me? She is most necessary."

"I will do my utmost," said Gladys.

In an effort to obtain a female foot-inspector she wrote letters all over China: to the Mission in Tientsin, to Luan, to Hongkong, to Shanghai, to wherever she thought there might be a Christian community.

The replies were almost identical. Firstly, any suitable girl, with large feet, could not speak the dialect; secondly, she could not, or did not wish to, ride a mule; thirdly, they did not wish, or were not able, to exist on a staple diet of millet.

Approximately two months later, complete with his retinue, the mandarin swept once again into the courtyard of the Inn of Eight Happinesses. He dismounted from his sedan chair, and his followers grouped in a serious semicircle behind him.

"You have not found a woman?" he asked accusingly.

Gladys decided that this time she would omit the bowings and scrapings. "Mandarin, I am still trying," she said humbly.

With a contemptuous gesture the mandarin silenced her.

"Then it must be *you* who becomes foot-inspector," he announced. "You are the only woman in the province with big feet. You must take the job!"

Gladys opened her mouth and closed it again. She searched in her mind for some conversational straw on which to cling. "But I'm a Christian. . . . I'm not Chinese. I don't know anything about feet. . . ."

"It is very simple. You will travel from village to village and tell the people of the government's decree. You will assemble the women in the centre of the village or in their houses and inspect their feet. If the feet of the infants are bound you will unbind them. You will report any hindrance on the part of any village elder to me and I will deal with it. You will be armed with my authority and report to me personally. The Central Government is most anxious to stamp out this reprehensible habit and you must start your duties at once. Do you agree?"

As he talked, Gladys's thoughts fell into place. She wondered why she hadn't thought of it before. A mule out to the most distant villages? A guard to protect her? It was an opportunity without parallel for her to visit every part of the province, preaching wherever she went.

"You must realize, Excellency," she said, "that if I accept this position I shall try to convert the people of this province to Christianity wherever I go."

There was a short silence. Then he said quietly: "I care nothing for your religion or to whom you preach. This is a matter for the conscience of each individual. But it is important that you should do this work. The Central Government is impatient."

She bowed low. "I am anxious to be of assistance, Mandarin. I will gladly accept the position."

She caught a gleam of amusement in his eye.

"Thank you," he said. "The mule and the soldiers will be ready for you tomorrow morning and whenever you need them from now onwards. I wish you good fortune."

Chang came back to peer with a sort of curious terror at Gladys. "You are now important," he said. "You work for the *yamen*, you are the mandarin's personal servant." He bowed low and humbly. It was the first time Gladys had ever impressed him.

Gladys's journeys to the distant villages did not start at once. There was a great deal of inspection to be done within Yangcheng itself and in the dwellings outside the city walls.

What Chang had implied was true. The official blessing of the *yamen*—the mandarin's headquarters—plus the physical presence of two rather grubby soldiers gave her an importance she had never experienced or expected. People stood up when she spoke to them. Babies' feet were unwrapped at record speed when she demanded it.

She never forgot the first village at which she arrived as official foot-inspector.

The soldiers inquired after the village elder. When he appeared they told him of the mandarin's decree. He nodded his head seriously as he listened. The village "crier" was dispatched to tell the villagers to assemble in the square. There was a little difficulty about it: peasants had to be fetched away from the fields, from their houses, from tending their animals.

With everyone present, the elder informed them, in a high, cracked voice, that footbinding would cease from then on; that the feet of children still able to recover would be unbound. The mandarin had given these orders. The soldiers, who thoroughly enjoyed their small authority, then reiterated the proclamation and made it quite clear that anyone who disobeyed the order would at once be thrown into prison.

HUSBANDS—2

The calmest husbands make the stormiest wives.

Isaac D'Israeli

Then they turned to tell Gladys that it was time for the inspection. She did not know quite what to do, but to make some sort of move she walked across the square towards the first small house she could see. A crowd gathered behind her. Reassured by the raucous presence of her two soldiers, she went in through the open door. The soldiers waited outside.

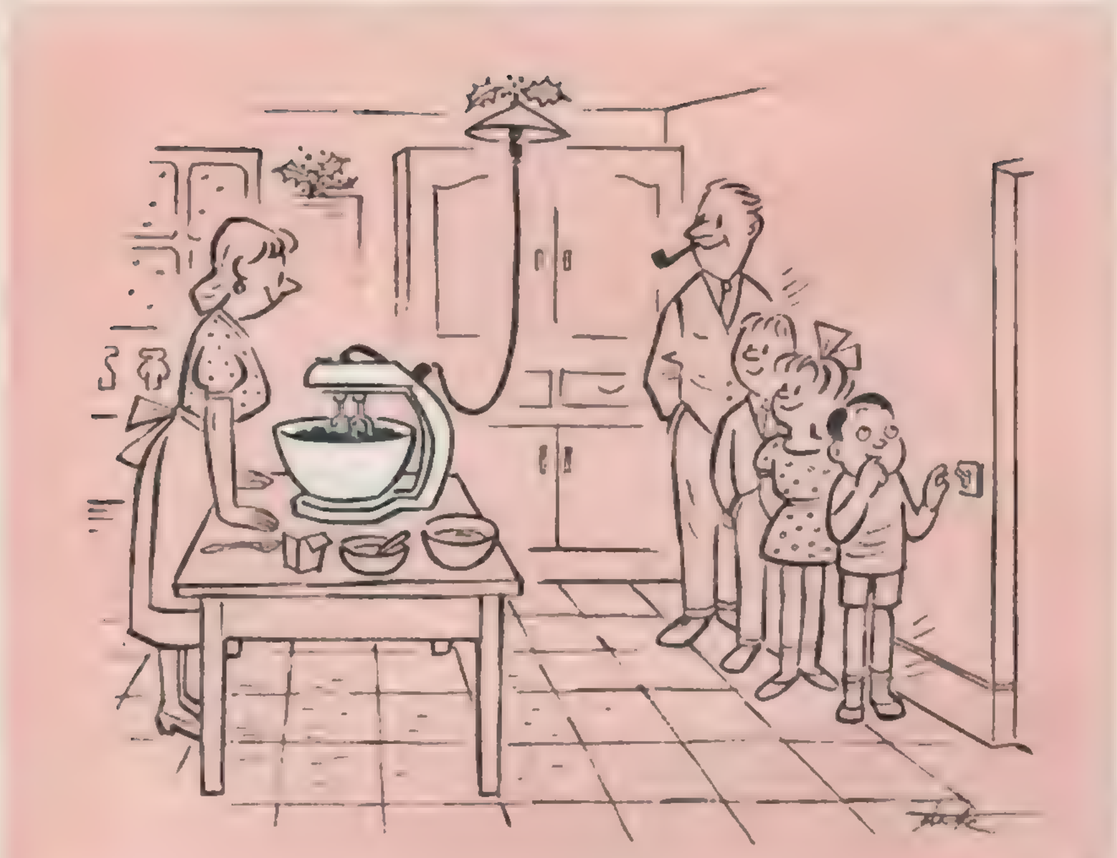
It was clean and neat, but there was no furniture, only a few cooking pots and utensils; the quilted bedding was piled on the brick *k'ang* where the family slept. A small dark-eyed girl, aged about three, clung to her mother's trousers and looked nervously round her legs at Gladys. A single glance was sufficient to tell that her feet were bound.

"That one," said Gladys, trying to insert a note of authority into her voice. "Unbind her feet!"

Two women neighbours and a grandmother had now appeared in the room. The mother took the child on her lap and all four women began to undo the bandages.

"Come on, now. Hurry up! If God intended little girls to have horrible stubby little feet, He'd have made them like that in the first place, wouldn't He?" said Gladys.

She almost pushed the women away, and, kneeling down, gently prised the



toes up and away from the sole. The child regarded her with wide, timid eyes. She massaged the foot tenderly.

Everyone now wanted to help in the foot massage; everyone wanted to tell of the pain and the trouble their own feet had given them for the past ten years. One of the neighbours rushed off to the next house to explain what had to be done and the news went round the village before Gladys had finished her first chore. On her visits she soon found housewives dutifully exhibiting all their little girls with unbound feet. Gladys stayed that night at the house of the elder. The rest of her journey through the villages was very much a repetition of this first scene.

Many of the villages in the remote valleys were cut off almost entirely from the outside world. Her visits became events of considerable excitement; she brought news of the outside world, such as it was; and as a story-teller she commanded their devotion.

In the evenings the villagers crowded in to learn the new songs which ran with a lilt and intonation quite different from their own, and listen to the stories she told of a man called Jesus Christ whose honourable ancestor was the great God who lived in the clouds. It appeared to them that this man Jesus had lived in a simple society closely akin to their own.

These, for Gladys, were the years of endless content. With the Inn of Eight Happinesses as a base and a small Christian community growing up around it, her wanderings through the mountains were always adventures. The weeks passed into months and the months into years and there was a harvest of happiness to be gathered from each day.

In this wide terrain of high mountains and deep valleys, where the material way of living was meagre and hard, she grew to maturity. All that had gone before was a preparation for this, and this only a preparation for what was to come.

DURING her second year at Yangcheng there arrived a pleasant young man called Lu-Yung-Cheng. He was a convert sent from Tsehchow by Mrs. Smith, who said she would pay his salary, which worked out at ninepence a month. He was useful if only because he could keep an ear on Chang's romantic interpretation of the Scriptures. About two weeks after he arrived, both he and Gladys were standing in the courtyard when in rushed a messenger from the *yamen* waving a piece of scarlet paper. He gabbled at such a rate that Gladys found it difficult to understand him.

"What's the paper for, anyway?" she asked Lu-Yung-Cheng.

"It's an official summons from the *yamen*," said Lu-Yung-Cheng nervously. "A riot has broken out in the men's prison."

"You must come at once," said the messenger urgently. "It is most important!"

Gladys stared at him. "But what's the riot in the prison to do with us?"

"You must come at once."

Lu-Yung-Cheng looked at her doubtfully. "When that piece of red paper arrives from the *yamen*, you must go." There was a nervous tremor in his voice.

"Hurry, please hurry!" cried the messenger.

"All right," she said mildly, "I'll come. But I certainly don't see what a riot in the prison has to do with me. . . ."

SHE hurried up the road and in through the West Gate. A few yards inside the gate the blank outside wall of the prison flanked the main street. From the other side came an unholy cacophony: screams, shouts, yells, the most horrible noises.

The governor of the prison, small, pale-faced, his mouth set into a worried line, met her at the entrance. Behind were grouped half a dozen of his staff. "We are glad you have come," he said quickly. "There is a riot in the prison; the convicts are killing each other."

"So I can hear," Gladys said. "I'm only the missionary woman. Why don't you send the soldiers in to stop it?"

"The convicts are murderers, bandits and thieves," said the governor. "The soldiers are frightened. You must go in and stop the fighting!"

"I must go in? Me! Me go in there? Are you mad? If I went in, they'd kill me!"

"But how can they kill you? You tell everybody that you have come here because you have the living God inside you. You preach it everywhere, in the streets and villages. If you preach the truth, if your God protects you from harm, then you can stop this riot."

Gladys stared at him. She kept thinking: *It's true! You have been preaching that your Christian God protects you from harm. Fail now, and you are finished in Yangcheng. Discard your faith now, and you discard it for ever!*

It was a desperate challenge. Somehow she had to maintain her face. But how could she go into the prison? Those men . . . murderers, thieves, bandits, rioting and killing each other inside those walls! By the sounds, louder now, a small human hell had broken loose. "I must try," she said to herself. "I must try. Oh, God, give me strength."

She looked up at the governor's pale face, knowing that now hers was the same colour.

"All right," she said. "Open the door. I'll go in to them." She did not trust her voice to say any more.

NEXT WEEK: Gladys Aylward defies the Mandarin of Yangcheng

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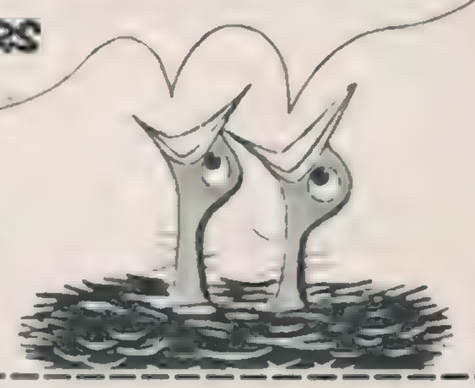

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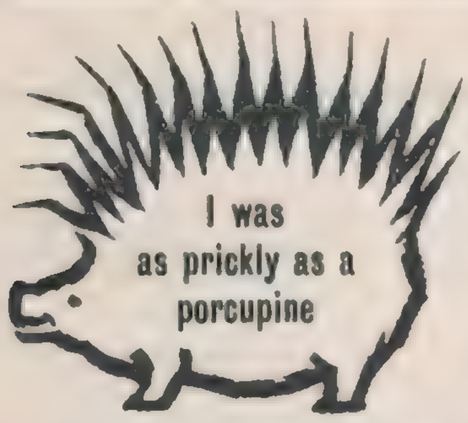

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Sapphires on Wednesday

Continued from page 11

vigorously. "You see, I am not ashamed. You understand this situation, Mr. Raeborrne?"

"I think so."

"Good! A year ago, Mr. Raeborrne, our mother died. Among the things she left is a collar of sapphires. They are Kashmir sapphires, a little too pale, or they would be worth even more. Miro thought it was to be left to him. He thought it *should* be his. Two weeks ago he came to visit me. When he left my house he took the collar with him."

Mme Malatino broke off dramatically and stared at Mark as though challenging him to comment. "Now, Mr. Raeborrne—that is theft, is it not?"

"It would appear to be."

"Appear to be! But of course it is theft. For this I could have my brother thrown into prison." Again Mark was conscious of the long, challenging stare. "But, you see, that I don't do. I do not call in the police to arrest my own brother. Miro knows that very well. But I want my property back. I come to you."

"And how do you think I can help you to recover your property, Madame Malatino?"

"That I will tell you. Three days ago my brother went on business to Manchester. The day after tomorrow he sails from Southampton to New York. He will carry the collar with him. I plan you travel in the same ship, Mr. Raeborrne, to take my collar from Miro." Mme Malatino sat back, flung her fur round her shoulders and gave Mark a wide and sinister smile.

Mark twisted a pencil between his fingers, his face politely masked. "Of course," he said, "you have proof that the collar is really your property?"

"You are cautious, Mr. Raeborrne." Mme Malatino's smile broadened. "I am glad of it. But if you will come to my house I shall produce to you the will which left the collar to me. And, of course, Miro will not charge me, or my agent, any more than I would charge him. It is a matter of honour, to keep our quarrels private. When you take the collar, I mean very well that Miro shall know who is responsible. You will place one of my cards in its place. There will be no police trouble.

"I will pay," Mme Malatino continued, "your usual fee and expenses. In addition, whether you obtain my collar or not, I will pay you one hundred pounds of . . . danger money. But if you recover me my collar, I will pay you three hundred pounds, Mr. Raeborrne."

Mark looked down at his desk. After a moment he said: "I won't decide yet, Madame Malatino. But I'll tell you what I will do. I'll see if there's a passage in your brother's ship. What ship is she?"

"The Manhattan."

"You realize the chances are against it—at such short notice, at this time of the year?"

Mme Malatino raised one plump hand from her lap and made a gesture dismissing "the chances."

"Today, Mr. Raeborrne, the cards are with me. This morning I drew ——" She broke off. "But perhaps you don't believe in omens?"

Mark's eyes flickered for an instant. He hated admitting he was superstitious, but was scared to deny it, in case the denial crossed his luck. He tried a double bluff.

"But I do," he said smiling. "Especially about gems. And this is the day for sapphires."

"It's true? There are days for jewels?"

"Oh yes." Mark smiled. "And it's sapphires on Wednesday. . . ."

Six minutes later he was on his way to the office of the New York Shipping Corporation with a cheque for the passage in his pocket. . . .

MME MALATINO's house at Sunningdale was smaller than Mark had expected. But it was certainly luxurious; very Sunningdale, all white paint and shining windows, and surrounded by trim lawns and handsome trees.

As Mark turned off the thirty-yard drive to the front door, a car swept in through the gates and crunched swiftly over the thick gravel up to the garage. Out of it, surprisingly quickly yet without any scramble, came a girl. She walked across the gravel towards Mark, smiling.

"Mr. Raeburn?"

Mark smiled in reply. He had thought the girl English, but he knew at once from her voice that he had been mistaken: she was American.

"Yes," he said. "Mark Raeburn."

"Good. I'm Audie Malatino. I'm afraid my aunt will be a little late. But come on in."

The girl turned and led the way up the steps to the front door. Mark had an impression of long, elegant legs and an almost babyish wave of hair lifting, surprisingly lightly, on the breeze.

Then they were inside. The hall was dark, heavy, sombre, rich. And the drawing-room into which Audie ushered him was the same, despite its large windows. Mark had an impression of crimson velvet curtains, stiff brocade, teak and silver.

"Sit down, Mr. Raeburn. I'm just going to have some coffee. Will you have some?"

"Thank you. I'd like to."

Audie Malatino took off her gloves and touched a bell. She wore a wedding ring.

A dark, elderly woman came in answer to the bell, and Audie spoke to her rapidly in a language which Mark supposed to be Italian. While she spoke he examined her. He had the professional trick of examining a face thoroughly, so that he never forgot it, while never seeming to pay close attention. Audie's face was full and smooth—surprisingly full for her slender figure—but both attractive and assured.

"You speak Italian very well," he said, when the other woman had gone. He hoped it *was* Italian.

Audie smiled, acknowledging the compliment. "Well, I lived in Italy for two years." Her smile was friendly, but somehow reserved. "My husband is Italian."

"But you're American?"

"Well, yes. That's not much of a

guess, is it?" This time she laughed. "I'm from New York."

"It must be a fine place to be from." Mark spoke casually. Obviously, Audie wouldn't know he was going to New York on Mme Malatino's behalf.

"Well," said Audie, "it's too hot in summer and too cold in winter, and it's too big and too noisy and it's covered with garbage, and"—she smiled again—"I love it. As a matter of fact I'm just going back."

"I suppose New York must be at its best at this time of the year."

"Yes. Now and in the fall it really is lovely. The air really is like they say—you know, like champagne, and you feel you could go on for ever."

"Will you be staying long?"

"Well, I'm not staying in New York itself, I'm going to a place called May Harbor. We had a summer place there when I was a kid, and now I have to try to get someone to rent it."

"Won't that be easy?"

"It shouldn't be too difficult. It's in a nice place, right on the sea. It used to be an old coastguard house."

Audie put down the cup of coffee she had finished, and at the same moment Mark heard again the crunch of wheels on gravel.

"I guess that must be my aunt." Audie rose to her feet and looked out of the window. "Yes," she said, "it is. I know you have business to talk with her, Mr. Raeburn, so I'll leave you now." She held out her hand.

"I enjoyed our talk," Mark said as he took it. "I hope we'll meet again."

"I hope so, too," Audie said, and for a moment they smiled at one another. Then she turned and, with her rapid, easy walk, left the room.

Mme Malatino's entry was a striking contrast to Audie's exit. Deliberate and somehow menacing, with her heavy black hair and unreadable pale face, she began to talk even as she came through the door.

"Mr. Raeborrne! Good morning. You have obtained a passage in the Manhattan?"

"Yes."

"Good. Now, if you will look at these papers which I have brought from my bank you will see an English translation of my mother's will." Mme Malatino opened a pigskin dispatch case which she had brought with her.

"And here is a letter from Witchlow, Witchlow and Foster, signed by Mr. Guest. This guarantees you the will. You will read."

So far as Mark could see the papers were watertight. "Yes," he said. "That supplies proof that the collar was left to you. And you will give me your card to put in place of the collar?"

"Yes. I will give you. Please pass me my bag."

Mark passed to her the bag which she had put down when she entered the room. Mme Malatino rummaged in it for a moment and then took out a visiting card. In addition to her name and address it bore the name of a West End card club.

Mark looked at it a moment. "Don't you think," he said, "it would be more effective if you made it out as a receipt?"

Mme Malatino frowned. "A receipt?"

"Yes. 'Received from my brother Miro one sapphire collar stolen from me'—or something like that." Mark laughed. "That would be in the spirit of your game."

"All right." Abruptly Mme Malatino took a pen out of her bag and scrawled rapidly on the card. "Indeed, why not?"

They discussed details for a few moments. "And now," said Mme Malatino, "is there any information I can give you?"

"Yes," Mark said. "I'd like to hear something about your brother's habits. Has he any particular ones I ought to know about?"

"Miro works by day," Mme Malatino said slowly, "and enjoys himself in the evening. He eats little by day and drinks nothing. At dinner he both drinks and eats well. But he doesn't become drunk. After dinner, on board ship, he will play bridge, but only if it is calm. If it is rough he will stay in his cabin. He is not a good sailor."

Mme Malatino gave a malicious chuckle. Then she continued: "Miro likes to be looked at, to be prominent, to create notice—to show off. He likes the attention of women. He always carries a gun," she added. "And so must you." She spoke quite casually.

Mark sat up. "A gun? Do you really mean to tell me your brother would shoot me?"

"No, Mr. Raeborrne, my brother will not shoot you. He is not crazy. But he might easily play some trick with a gun."

"I don't like tricks with guns."

"No. But you will feel a great fool if Miro bluffs you, and it is easy for a man with a gun to fool a man who has not a gun."

"All right," Mark said. "I'll carry a gun." He rose to his feet. "If you'll excuse me, I will go now. I have a hundred and one things to do." The thought of making small talk with Mme Malatino appalled him. In any case he had a call to pay at a photographer's.

Mme Malatino gave her characteristic abrupt, forceful nod. She said: "Yes. I expect. Very good then. I will say just one thing more before you go. I have complete confidence in you, Mr. Raeborrne. . . ."

The great ship lay gleaming and glittering in the morning sunshine, looking like some superb advertisement for ocean travel. The passengers who were swarming on board her were pleased and excited; they tended to be young and happy, with good digestions, clear eyes and unmasked faces.

Later, on the First Class boat train, would come the experienced travellers, the men with the gold lighters and the cynical eyes, the women with the minks and the lines of boredom round the mouth, the old bank presidents with the nurses and the packages of special rusks. But the Tourist passengers were licensed to enjoy themselves.

Mark Raeburn, like the other Tourist passengers, came aboard the Manhattan through the First Class quarters. Stewards in Schiaparelli pink jackets, page boys in white gloves, hung around in profusion. A chief steward in brass buttons dominated the scene.

"Tourist passengers on the left, please." Every few seconds his authoritative bawl drove into the ears of the new arrivals. Mark went quietly past him. The chief steward put out a hand and caught his sleeve. "You deaf, Mac?" he said. "I said Tourist passengers on the left."

Mark looked at him and spoke quietly down into his ear. "Take your hand off me," he said. "I'm going to see the First Class purser. Any objection?"

"No, that's okay."

The First Class purser's office was empty. An assistant purser was conning lists. He smiled and rose to his feet. He said: "What can I do for you, sir?"

"I believe my friend Harry Ableson is travelling on this trip," said Mark. "What cabin?"

The assistant put a page of his list on the table and ran his finger down it. "I don't see any Ableson,' he said. "No, sir, no Ableson."

"Never mind, he wasn't sure about it. He must be flying. Thanks."

Mark sauntered out. Miro Ablondi, he had seen, was in Cabin 42C.

He wandered slowly around the First Class quarters, familiarizing himself

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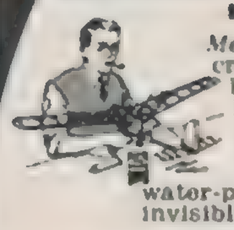

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with them. After a time he located C Deck, and then Cabin 42. He walked past it, noting its exact position, the type of lock on the door, the cabin's relation to the nearest lounge, and other details.

He then made his way, without great regret, from the luxury of First, through the comfort of Cabin and into the bareness of Tourist. When he entered his own cabin he was surprised to find that it was a two-berth. Most, he knew, were fours. The lower bunk was already occupied by a tall young man who was lying on his back drinking from a bottle.

On Mark's entry he slowly took the bottle from his lips. "Hi!" he said. "I'm Steve Riegert."

Mark introduced himself.

Steve swung his legs off his bunk. "What do you say we go and have a look at the great vessel taking off for the New World?"

"That would be a good idea," said Mark. "Just let me put my stuff out."

He put the small portable radio which he was carrying on his bunk and twisted the knob. "That," said an announcer's voice, "was Harry Woobey and his Orchestra. Now before the news summary, which follows in two and a half minutes, here is the weather forecast. A trough of low pressure—"

"We better hear this," Steve said. "It's good and breezy right now."

"—strong south-westerly winds, possibly rising to gale force in places . . ." the smooth voice continued.

"I know these places," said Riegert. "They'll be the places we're going. You a good sailor?"

"I used to be."

"So did I. When I'm at sea I like to eat for two, and it looks like I'm going to have the chance. You, too. Let's go and look at the girls while they're still on their feet. . . ."

That evening the upper Tourist boat deck was deserted and only dimly lit as Mark walked along it slowly, a solitary figure in a light overcoat counting the table-tennis tables. The door he wanted lay between the fifth and the sixth of these, but he went a little farther, sauntering, a passenger taking a last stroll before dinner.

When he was satisfied that there was no one about he turned back to the door and pushed in, between the lock and the door frame, the end of an instrument which looked like, but was not, a pocket-knife. He turned this, probing, for several seconds, and then gave a sharper turn, wedging upwards. The door opened and he stepped into a corner of the First Class library.

This corner of the library was cut off by a bookcase, and no one saw him. He took off his overcoat and emerged in evening clothes. The coat he laid beside an easy chair and then he took a book from the shelves and laid it on the coat. Having thus secured his base, he went across the library and made his way down to C Deck.

THE Manhattan had now been under way for seven hours, and these seven hours Mark had divided between his own part of the ship and the First Class.

He sat down in the C Deck lounge and took up a magazine. Miro would have to come through this lounge on his way to whichever of the two First Class restaurants he favoured. One served a formal dinner at eight; the other was a grillroom open all the evening. From what Mme Malatino had told him of Miro's habits, Mark reckoned Miro would take the formal dinner and play bridge afterwards.

When Miro entered the lounge, Mark recognized him at once. There was no mistaking him. He had the same full white face as his sister, the same dark, hooded eyes, the same shining black hair. But Miro's nose was bigger, and —Mark saw as the man turned round, looking for an empty chair—he had a slight tic at the left corner of his mouth, a very slight nervous jerk every few seconds.

So this was the opposition—and a tough customer, no doubt.

Mark watched. Every movement, every gesture, might betray some characteristic. Miro found a seat and summoned a steward with a jerk of his whole arm. The steward was beside him in an instant. Miro was not a man that stewards or anyone else would overlook.

"A bitter Campari. Soda." Miro's voice was surprisingly loud. At that distance Mark had not expected to hear the order at all, but the harsh voice was very audible.

Miro drank his Campari and rose to his feet. His jacket pockets were bulging, and there was something funny about the way his jacket sat across his chest. Was it a shoulder-holster? It could be. And was he carrying the collar in his jacket pocket? Again, he could be. But, of course, he could be carrying a pipe and tobacco-pouch; or business letters; or, for all Mark knew, a pocket edition of *Little Women*.

Miro had only taken a couple of steps when it happened. For the last half hour it had been impossible to believe any longer that the Manhattan was a luxurious hotel on shore. The great ship's long roll was lazy and smooth, but it made balance difficult. And this was something more; a feeling of the floor falling away, and a sharp pitch at the same time.

Miro lurched; at the same moment a woman, sitting beside him, brought her hand round with a drink in it. In the

Windfalls

by DOUGLAS GIBSON

Walking the orchard where the white wind hissed
And bent the boughs across the sky's grey glass,
I found four ripe red apples we had missed,
Hidden amongst the frosty tangled grass.

Their coldness stabbed like ice; but in my hands
I felt them thaw, for I was warm with pleasure,
Like an adventurer in barren lands
Who stumbles on an unprospected treasure.

The promises fulfilled we soon forget;
Always the unexpected seems the best:
A love come late, an early violet,
Or windfall apples in a grassy nest.

next instant a dark spattering stain covered her dress from hip to ankle.

At once a steward sprang forward with a cloth. The woman's husband bent and mopped at her dress with a handkerchief.

Above the fuss, Miro stood curiously still, looking down, arrogant and contemptuous. Then, after a moment, he spoke.

"I guess that dress is ruined," he said. He spoke without sympathy, in the same loud harsh voice. "It was the roll of the ship, of course, but I'm willing to pay for a replacement." He pulled a wallet out of his pocket. "Here's my card." His arrogance was almost, but not quite, insulting.

The husband looked up. He was small, round and young, with a good-natured, weak face.

"Well," he hesitated, flushed with irritation and embarrassment. "I guess it *was* the ship. I'll speak to the purser . . . and, of course, the dress'll be covered by insurance." He looked at the card doubtfully.

Miro shrugged and thrust the card at him, then turned and walked out without a glance. Mark rose and followed.

Miro went into the restaurant. That was good. In the grillroom it was possible to be in and out again in twenty minutes. But in the restaurant eating a formal dinner would take an hour.

Mark returned to C Deck. Both the deck and the small lounge at the end of it were now deserted, and by sitting by the door of the lounge it was possible to see right along the corridor in which Miro's cabin was third on the right.

No cabin steward was in sight but, after Mark had been watching for a few moments, the door of the second cabin on the right opened and a woman came out of it into the lounge. The lounge steward approached her smiling.

"Hi, George," she said, "gimme a Bourbon on the rocks."

"Sure, Mrs. Helweg."

When she got her drink, the woman downed it at a gulp and went out. Mark left immediately after she had gone.

HE walked quickly along the corridor to Miro's cabin and opened the door. In the next moment he had to do some rapid thinking, for there, hovering over a suitcase, and looking up at him in surprise, was a steward.

"Is this," Mark asked, "Mrs. Helweg's cabin?" He was pleased to hear that his voice sounded right—casual, but like a man in a hurry.

Suspicion, which had been strong in the steward's face, cleared a little. "Mrs. Helweg?" He spoke slowly. "Mrs. Helweg? No. She's next door. This is Mr. Ablondi's cabin."

"Sorry. I'll go next door."

"Mrs. Helweg is out. I heard her door close."

"I know she's out. She asked me to come down for a wrap."

"If Mrs. Helweg wants a wrap, she should tell a boy to come and get it from me. It's best if passengers don't go wandering round other people's cabins."

"I'm sorry," said Mark. "I didn't realize." He added: "I don't like to trouble you people too much. It seems to me you have plenty to do."

"You're not kidding," said the steward morosely. He hesitated for a moment and then burst out: "Why just having Mr. Ablondi is like having three passengers. You should have seen this cabin half an hour ago. Like a hurricane had hit it. Everything on the floor. He travelled with me before and that's how he is. He don't take no care of anything."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Mark. "I'll just pick up the wrap this time, but I won't do it again."

"That's okay. But you see how it is."

Mark nodded and left. It would not do to run across that steward again in suspicious circumstances. . . .

Beyond the glass that covered in the upper boat deck the Atlantic rolled and tossed in grey moving hills of water, topped with creaming white. Very few passengers were still on their feet.

"We'll be out of this weather before dinner," Mark said. "Listen, Steve, let's have a drink in the First Class for a change."

"Sure," said Riegert. "How do we go?"

Mark drew out the gadget that looked like a pocket-knife. The door into the First Class library was beside him. He was aware of Steve watching him curiously as he inserted the spatula, turned and lifted. He smiled and motioned Steve into the library.

"That was smart. Where did you learn that one?"

"Oh, in the army," said Mark. He led the way to the bar. Steve attempted to hoist himself on a stool, but gave up as it heeled over.

Mark laughed. He said: "Wait for me here a moment will you?"

He went quickly down to C Deck, looking for the steward he had spoken to previously. Miro Ablondi had not left his cabin during the storm, and was still in it. And the voyage was almost over. Mark had now less than twenty-four hours in which to get the collar.

He found the steward at last, carrying two buckets. "Hallo." Mark smiled sympathetically. "You look far gone."

The steward put his buckets down

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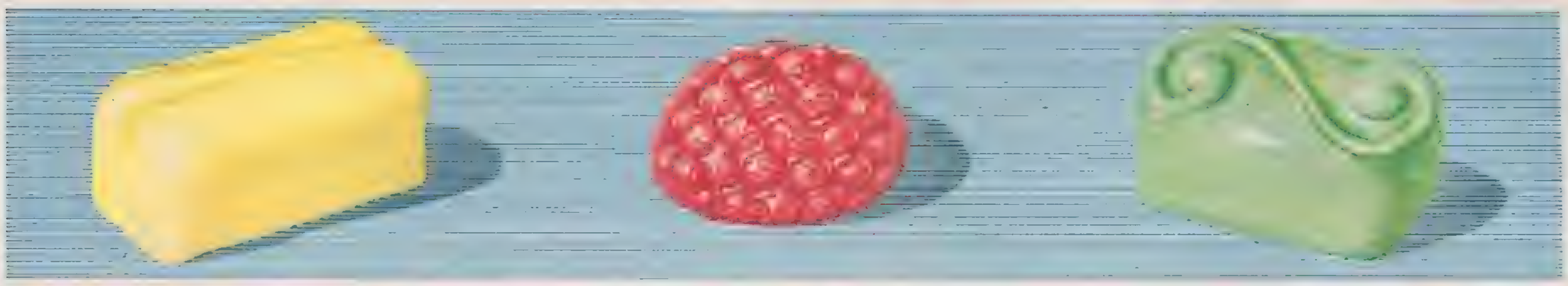

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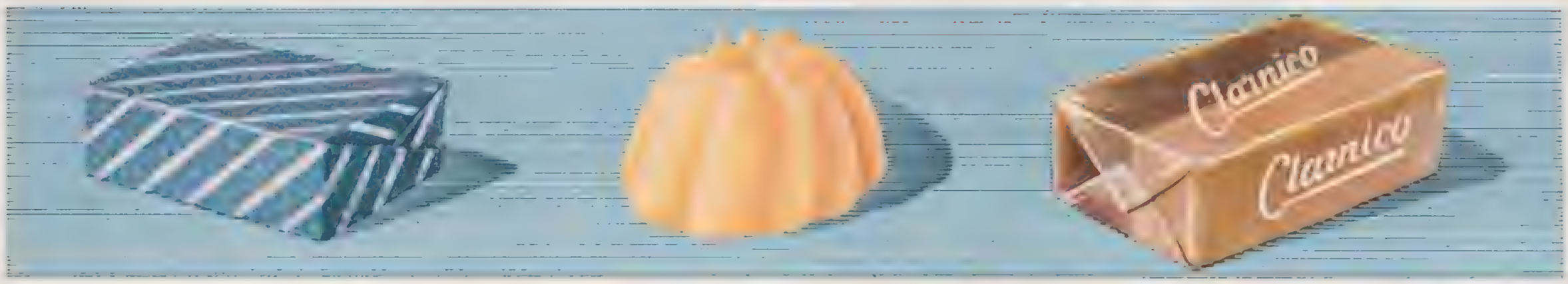

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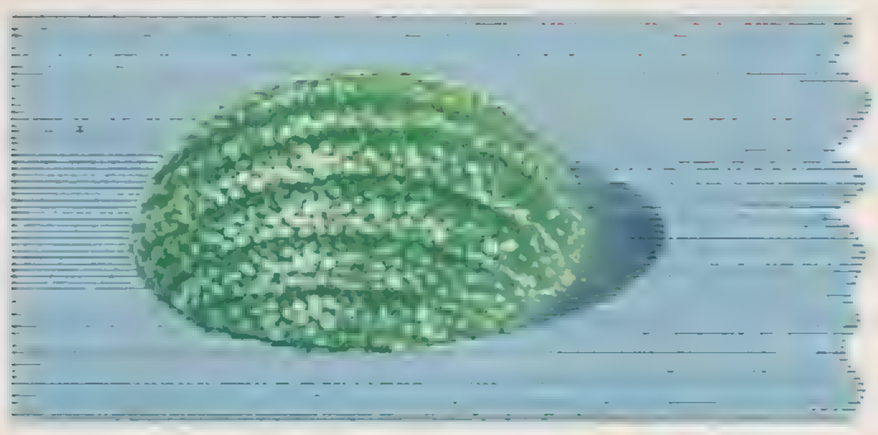

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with a sigh. "We've got some awful sick people aboard," he said.

"I was coming down to ask for my friend Mrs. Helweg."

"She's asleep, her stewardess says."

"Well, I shan't bother then." Mark turned away, and then turned back with a casual laugh. "I bet Mr. Ablondi's cabin is a mess."

"You're not kidding. He's getting better now, like most of them. But he won't go out, I betya. Not unless he has to. Might lose his dignity." The steward picked up his buckets with a tired smile.

Mark went up to the bar again, wondering how to get Miro out of his cabin.

Steve was nursing his whisky. He slewed his eyes round discreetly as Mark joined him.

"Big shots," he said quietly. "You see the old buzzard over my shoulder—the purple one with the white moustache? That's Robert C. Whylom, New York state senator and president of the New York Shipping Corporation. The boss, in short."

"Ill-tempered looking old brute!" Mark said.

The bar was beginning to look a little more normal. The sea was now definitely less rough, and gradually more and more passengers were beginning to feel that they could face a drink again.

Among those in the bar, Mark noticed the man who had been in the row with Miro.

"Steve," he said suddenly. "I'm going to enliven this trip a little."

He moved along the bar, with Steve following, until he stood beside Miro's victim. "Morning," he said. "Can I have a word with you?"

"Sure." The man's round, good-natured face was pale.

"I saw that thing the first evening, where a man knocked into your wife."

The pale young man flushed. "That swine!" he said.

"Exactly!" said Mark. He sounded angry. "You know what he did to me half an hour ago? I was going down some stairs. Well, the ship was plunging, like she's been doing, and I must have knocked against him. Know what he did? He put his hand on my chest, flat, like that"—Mark put his hand on the young man's chest—"and pushed me up against the wall."

"If I was your size," said the young man, "he wouldn't have pushed *me*."

"No," said Mark. He looked embarrassed. "But you know how it is. There were people about. . . ."

"I know," said the young man feelingly. "He made me feel a fool, giving me his damn card."

"Listen," said Mark. "You and I both owe him something. Have a drink and I'll tell you how we can pay him."

He talked for several minutes. At the end the young man grinned and drew Miro's card cautiously from his wallet. Mark quietly slipped it into his own.

A FEW moments later Mark left the other two and made for the door. He was, perhaps, lurching a little more than the motion of the ship justified. As he passed Mr. Robert C. Whylom, he sidestepped towards him and fell heavily at his feet. The old man looked up sharply, and several men at the bar turned round.

Mark rose to his knees. "Why don't you keep your blasted feet in?" His voice was loud and slurred.

Mr. Whylom turned a deeper colour. "You didn't fall over my feet," he said. "You know best yourself why you fell."

"You implying I've been drinking?" Mark asked. He got up unsteadily. "Why, you old soak, I've been watching you since I came in. You've drunk the better part of a bottle of whisky. That's why you sit with your feet out."

Mr. Whylom rose to his feet. "I see," he said grimly, "that you don't know who I am. My name is Whylom. I am the president of this line. I shall have an apology for this."

A steward hastened to his side. "That's right," he said. "Mr. Whylom is the president. You can't speak to Mr. Whylom that way."

"The old boozer may kid you," said Mark. "He doesn't kid me." He drew out his wallet. "Here's my card," he said. "You can come and dig for your apology."

Mr. Whylom was a dangerous puce colour. "No, sir," he said in a strangled voice, "you shall come and give it to me," and he stumped towards the door.

Mark swayed out of the other door, leaving a growing buzz of conversation behind. When he was out of the door and round the corner, he straightened up and went rapidly and unobtrusively down to C Deck. Here, in the lounge from which he had a view of Miro's cabin, he picked up a magazine and settled down to watch.

Five minutes passed . . . ten . . . a quarter of an hour. Then Mark saw a figure turn the corner rapidly and knock on Miro's door. It was the head steward who had put his hand on Mark's arm as he came aboard. A very faint smile passed across Mark's face.

Within three minutes the chief steward came out of Miro's cabin again. His face was red, and he looked agitated. He hurried away again.

Another five minutes passed . . . another ten. Then a large, red-faced man, in uniform, with a hard jaw and an athlete's easy stride, appeared with the chief steward trotting at his heels. A seaman, one of the deck crew, apparently chosen for size, brought up the rear.

It was all as Mark had expected. Mr. Whylom had gone to the captain, flourishing the card which Mark had given him. The captain had caused the chief steward to be sent with a request for Miro's presence. Miro had told the chief steward to go to hell. And now the master-at-arms, with supporters, had come to give, not a request, but an order.

The master-at-arms knocked on Miro's door; the other two remained outside, the chief steward making nervous movements with his feet and hands, the seaman stolid and motionless. After a couple of minutes the master-at-arms came out and said a word to the seaman, who turned on his heel and went off along the lobby. The chief steward started talking rapidly to the master-at-arms, but the big man remained impassive, silent and waiting.

Then Miro came out. His face was normally so white that it could hardly be whiter, but he was quite calm and self-possessed. There was about him a kind of stillness of rage. Soon, when Mr. Whylom saw him, and realized that he had been tricked, Miro would receive lavish apologies, but it was hard to believe he would ever forgive this hurt to his vanity.

He turned away along the lobby, followed by the master-at-arms. Mark put down his magazine and rose to his feet. He had, he reckoned, a quarter of an hour, but he aimed to be through in half that.

He left the lounge in an aimless manner and entered the lobby. There was no one about. Taking a deep breath, he turned the handle of the door and stepped into Miro's cabin.

To be continued next week

"Sapphires On Wednesday," by Malcolm Gair, will be published as a book next May by Collins at 10s. 6d.

MY SISTER Pat

WE spent our early childhood playing in and around Richmond Park, near our home. Pat was three years my junior and one of the games we enjoyed most was called King and Page. Naturally, I was the king and Pat was sent all over the place, eagerly trying to obey the orders of her somewhat dictatorial brother.

One of our most memorable holidays was spent in the Lake District. My father had given me a very smart trout fishing rod, complete with tackle and flies. Pat was filled with envy, for her rod was quite inferior—made of bamboo and rather ancient.

To Pat's delight, the fish seemed to dislike my superior rod, and while I caught nothing, she was excitedly hauling in a good catch of pike. As soon as we got back to the shore, Pat dashed off to show Mother and Father her catch—returning just in time to see most of the pike, which she had assumed to be dead, leap out of the bucket and back into the water.

When I was about fourteen my mother took me to the opera *Il Trovatore*. Later I bought the score, and of course my poor sister had to learn the soprano parts. The house resounded with the agonized laments of thwarted lovers, angry villains, distressed heroines in gloomy towers and intrepid heroes vainly trying to hit top A. Fortunately, all this musical slave-driving has not impaired her love of music.

During the early part of the war Pat was evacuated to some friends who lived on a farm on the border of Wiltshire and Dorset. One day she learned that King George VI was to inspect some troops who were stationed near the farm. Pat's daily job was to help bring in the ponies from the common and on that day she was determined to get them home in time for her to see the Royal car pass by.

To her dismay, however, one of the ponies got out of hand and galloped into the road. The others became excited and soon everything was in a chaotic muddle. A series of hoots from a large black car which wanted to pass annoyed Pat even further. She turned round furiously and mumbled to the driver: "Shut up, can't you see I'm trying to get these horses out of the road? I want to see the King, too."

She was so preoccupied that she didn't even bother to look up to see the car's Royal passenger.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS SISTER? See page 44

Son of the veld

Continued from page 21

at half past eight. Good night. Good night, Francina."

She said good night. Her father said good night.

As he went out of the door, Piet heard her father say: "That is a fine young man." For the first time he regretted some of the things he had done and must still do.

A week from today. Less than a week, for it was late now—already Sunday—and there was a lot to do. He must go and see Stoffel; his friend Stoffel. . . .

"Now you understand," Piet said, "when you hear the shots, you must come out and chase us. Come from the west, so that we can run toward the caves and hide there. It is clear?"

"*Ja*, Piet, it is clear," Stoffel said.

"Then, till I see you. . . ."

Saturday, like all winter days in the Transvaal, was crisp and clear. Later on it would get hot unless a wind sprang up.

When Piet got to Francina's house—he called it that in his mind—he found her father ready. She was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is Francina?" he asked.

"Busy," her father said. "Busy with some woman's work. She said we are to shoot plenty, so that she can make some biltong. She makes very good biltong."

"*Ja*," Piet said. "I am sure she does. Now we will go."

SERGEANT FOURIE picked up his rifle and bandolier. "Are we going far?"

"About twenty miles. Most of the buck are shot out near the dorp," Piet said. "Poachers. There are some very bad poachers round here."

"I was told about them before I came. One in particular, called Marais—Piet Marais—was mentioned."

"A cousin," Piet said. "A bad lot, I am afraid, but every family has its black sheep. No one is perfect. And in every home there is a skeleton in some cupboard. Poor Piet is the cross we must bear. But it is hard that we should bear the same name. Two Piet Maraises. To a stranger it is at first confusing."

"Have you spoken to him about it?"

"Many times I have argued with him for hours, trying to convince him of the error of his ways. But I have failed. *Ja, mevreer*, when he sees a buck he is possessed by a kind of madness. Hunting! That is all he thinks of."

"Perhaps I can cure him," Francina's father said. "If I catch him, I'll give him a good scare. A fright might do it, and the shame of a few days' prison, pending his trial."

Piet almost ran the car off the road. "You'd put Piet in prison?"

"Yes."

"Man," he said, "he would die if he were not free."

"It might cure him."

"No," Piet said, "he would die." He had the car under control again. Things were even worse than he had imagined; the police more brutal and unfeeling. Certainly Francina was no policeman's daughter. She was a foundling or, if not, a throwback to some earlier, more human, ancestor.

He remained silent, lost in the horrors of thought. Suddenly he pulled up. "We are here," he said.

Now the great plan would begin. This was it. The rest had only been preparation.

"We'll leave the car here," he said, and drove it into a patch of bush beside the road. "We just go through the fence." He pushed his rifle under the wire.

"Shouldn't we go up to the house to tell them we're here?"

"Oh, no. They expect us, and it's a long way."

The sergeant followed him. They opened and closed the bolts to load their rifles, and put on their safety catches.

The country here consisted of clumps of heavy bush separated by low bare ground which in the summer was a

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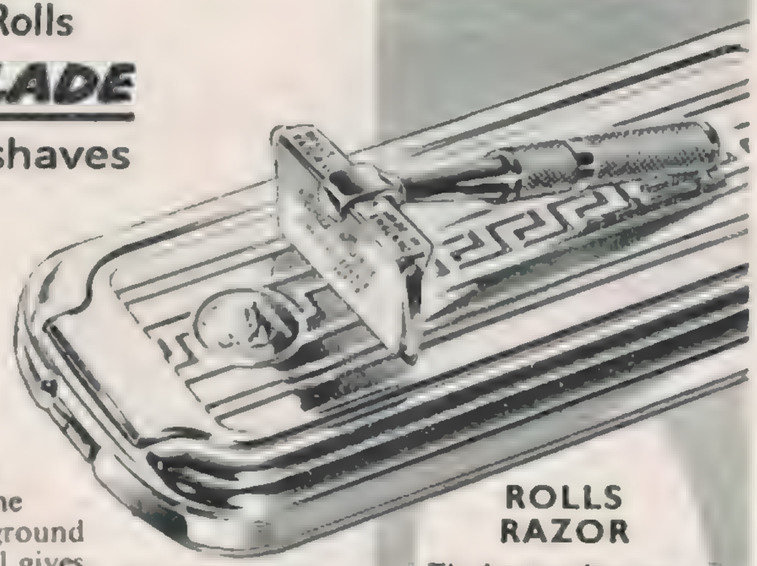

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marsh. Almost at once a herd of impala galloped into the open.

Piet dropped one. "A good shot," the sergeant said.

They hung the dead buck in a tree to keep it safe from vultures. "Now it's your turn," Piet said.

It came in a minute. A kudu bull stood looking at them fifty yards away. Sergeant Fourie hit it, but did not kill it. Piet fired again and brought it down as it leaped and turned to run.

"There's some nice biltong there," he said as they dragged the body under a big hook-and-stick thorn.

He led the sergeant out of the bush-patched country into the open. Suddenly he pointed. "Look, someone is coming." There was a man on a grey horse riding towards them. He was still a long way off.

"We must run," Piet said. "I know a place. Come, we must run."

"Run? Why run? We are not poachers."

"But that's just what we are. This man—this Stoffel Pretorious, who owns this farm—is a terrible man for poachers. That's why there is so much game here," Piet said. "We should not have come, but I wanted you to have some sport. And my cousin, Piet, said there was always game here. *Ja*," he added, "I heard that Stoffel was away on a visit. But that's him. Come, we must run. I will save you."

They ran towards some low hills, bending down and taking advantage of every bit of cover. When they stopped to gain their breath, lying flat on the grass, Piet said: "There are caves over there."

"But won't he look in the caves? Do you know what this means for me, young man? It means my career. A sergeant of police caught poaching!"

"Don't worry," Piet said. "You are safe with me. I will save you. You are Francina's father. But you must promise me something."

"What is it? You got me into this and now, to get me out, you want something. That is called blackmail. *Ja*," Sergeant Fourie said, "it is a crime for which you can be jailed for many years."

"Do not talk to me of jail. Either you promise, or both of us go."

"I promise. But what is it? How can I help promising?"

"I wish to marry Francina," Piet said, "and I require your permission."

"And you got me into this for that? To try to force me? Young man, you do not know Francina. I could not stop her if she wants you—though why she, or anyone, should is beyond me."

"Is that a kind thing to say, when I will save you? And I only tried to give you some sport."

"These caves," Fourie said. "Why will he not look for us there?"

"I expect he will, but they are very big. Many men have been lost in them. Some have never come back. I have found the skulls and bones of men who died there. You will like it. *Ja*," Piet said, "it is just the sort of place a policeman would like. Like prison and full of bones."

"And you will not get lost?"

"I hope not. My mother would be sad if I were lost. You see, Sergeant—Pa," Piet said, "I am the apple of her eye."

"I'm sure you are, Piet. But don't call me 'Pa' till you have seen Francina."

"*Ja*, Pa," Piet said, "and now in here." He parted some bushes and dived into a cleft in the rocks.

After some hours the two men came out. They crawled through the fence and found the car. Piet wanted to go back for the buck, but the sergeant would not let him.

"No," he said, "I have had enough for one day."

When they got back to Sergeant Fourie's house Piet said: "Those are my horses." There was a cape cart tied up to the gate. He stopped the car and went up to look at them. He patted their necks. He checked the *riem* that tied the *disselboom* to the post. It was fast.

"Piet, Piet!" He looked up. His mother was calling him from the little garden. Francina was with her.

"Ma," he said, "what are you doing here?"

"I wanted some things in the dorp. You had the car, so I drove. It is a pleasure to drive behind horses again."

"*Ja*," he said. "But here? With Francina?"

"Come in, Piet," she said.

He went up to Francina. "It's all right," he said. "I have fixed things with your pa. He says I can marry you."

"He does? And will I?"

"*Ja*, you will. Did you not come to me at the dance like a duck to a worm?" She began to laugh. "I did not mean that," he said, shuffling his feet, "but you know what I mean."

"I know," she said. "I came because I recognized you at once."

"How did you know me?"

"Your ma said you would come. She told me what you looked like—

HUSBANDS—4

Being a husband is a whole-time job. That is why so many husbands fail. They cannot give their entire attention to it.

Arnold Bennett

like a big yellow trek ox, as wide as you were tall and as big as a house."

"And I never knew. She said she was shopping."

"She came to the house," Francina went on, "and we met and talked. She said it was time I got married, that I was a pretty girl. Naturally, I did not argue. She said she had a great son who was a good lad, but foolish, and she'd send him to the dance for me to look over. She also said that Sterkwater is a good farm, and that she and my pa are thinking of getting married. They have been writing to each other."

"Ah," Piet said, "so those were his letters. She said it was business."

"Is not marriage business? And having children and the like?"

"I do not know," Piet said. "I have no idea." He sat down on the steps. His mother and Sergeant Fourie were talking.

The sergeant came towards him. "Piet," he said.

"*Ja*, Pa," Piet said. "I might as well call you Pa, at once, since I am to be both your stepson and son-in-law."

"*Ja*, Piet," said the sergeant. "You may call me Pa, but now that we are one family there is something that must be done once and for all."

"And what is that?"

"Something must be done about this poaching cousin of yours. We can have no scandal in the family."

"That's right," Piet said. "Something must be done. I will put my foot down."

"You have a lot of influence with him?"

"*Ja*," Piet said. "I am very close to him." Prison, he thought. He would die in prison and his children be disgraced. "It is his children I am thinking about. Poor little things left fatherless."

"*Ja*," Francina said, "it is his children that I think about, too." And she began to laugh. THE END

MY SISTER PAT

See page 43

Pat Smythe, the famous horsewoman, is the sister of the Rev. Ronald Smythe

Jungle ambush

Continued from page 25

on the launch. And I'll be in the Wampit—on my way."

"As easy as that," she said blandly.

He shrugged. "All good plans are simple."

But he knew it wasn't simple like that. There was a threadbare hope that he might elude the savages by slipping into the river as darkness fell, dodging their arrows by continual diving until night was tightly woven. But then he'd have to fight the Wampit alone, playing a desperate gamble that he would find a floating tree, anything that would give support. The river was too swift and turbulent for him to survive the journey to the coast unaided. He knew that, as surely as he knew there was no mercy in the natives. And when he lifted his head and looked at Jane Kingdom, he saw that she knew it too.

"You're a strange man," she said quietly. "But I'm beginning to understand."

Barron felt the warmth of risen blood staining his cheeks, and he forced his eyes into hardness—a protective hardness. "It's time you went."

"I told you before," she said evenly, "either we toss up or I stay. Darkness can cover two as easily as one."

There was such finality in her voice that Barron knew no further argument would help. He dropped on his haunches, unbuckled his pack and dragged out several tins of food. He opened beef and some baked beans with a small key, and handed them to Jane Kingdom.

"Here," he said stiffly. "We'll both need some strength later on."

She took the can and a fork he had rummaged from the pack. But after one mouthful she stopped eating. Suddenly she sat stiffly upright, staring at the tin of beef. Her hands were clenched, excitement was flaring in her eyes, and she had half risen from her brush-pile seat.

"We need half an hour's start," she said, the words rushing like water from a tap turned on. "I know how we can get it. Both of us!"

Barron felt a quick stab of excitement then, but he smothered it, telling himself this was mere clutching at a straw. He wanted to cut her short, fearing some fancied merit in her plan might lure him into going with her. But somehow he couldn't say the words.

"It'll have to be good," he grunted.

"It is good," Jane Kingdom said crisply. She gave the tin in her hand a little toss, then caught it again. "We can rig the guns with these so they'll fire while we're on our way down river."

"With tin cans?"

She nodded impatiently. "Tie one to each trigger and drip water into it. When it's heavy enough the gun will fire. Doesn't matter where the bullet goes. It's just the noise—to pretend we're still here."

It took Barron a few moments to adjust his thoughts to this new turn in their dilemma. Then he assessed the plan quickly, challenging it for faults. It seemed sound enough. Fantastic, too, in a way. But sound enough basically to make it far better than its alternative. Still he hesitated, wondering uneasily if self-interest was influencing his judgment, clinging to the tattered hope that she might go on ahead while he fought a rearguard action.

"Listen," she said. "It's a gamble. But it's the only chance for us both."

"I know," Barron said unwillingly. "But if you went now, by yourself, there'd be no gamble."

She leaned forward and touched his arm. "We're going together," she said firmly. "Now or later. Remember?"

The touch of her hand thrilled Barron through his thin, damp shirt sleeve, and he felt awkward. He realized then that his own plan was dead beyond resurrection, and any further urging of it would be merely tiresome. The only thing was to accept her idea and do everything possible to make it work.

"All right," he said briskly. "Let's get cracking."

"Good!" The word breathed thankfulness and relief, the way she said it. She stood up quickly. "We'll need frameworks. Something to clamp the guns on."

"I'll fix them," Barron said. "You do the tins. We can use liana to tie them. Run it straight back from the trigger and drop it over the end of the frame. The tanker tins will rest on the framework." He paused, knitting his brows. "Punch the hole in their outside edges and they'll sit well clear."

"They'll need to be different sizes," Jane Kingdom said. "The holes, I mean. To space out the firing."

"Ten-minute intervals," Barron said. "That'll give us half an hour's start. . . . Using my pistol, too." He snapped his fingers. "Open some more tins and try one out. Make a hole and see how long another one takes to fill. Make it fairly small, so you don't ruin the tin. Once you get one right, just guess at the others. We can't waste time."

"You really think it'll work?" Jane Kingdom demanded. Her voice suddenly was sharp. "Tell me. Tell me truthfully."

"With luck," he said curtly. "With any sort of luck, it'll work."

FOR the next half hour they worked with concentrated fury, the sweat rolling down their faces. While Barron built three frameworks of boughs, tight-laced with liana, Jane Kingdom experimented with the tin cans. The weight of one, three-quarters filled with water, was sufficient to pull the rifle's trigger. The Tommy gun and the pistol needed a little more.

Having established that, she punched a small hole in one of the tanker tins and timed the drip. It took fifteen minutes to drain down to the half-way mark, thirty minutes to empty. That would do for the pistol. Then, using that hole for a gauge, she punctured

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the two other tanker tins—a larger, ten-minute hole for the rifle, and a twenty-minute one for the Tommy gun.

By the time she had finished, Barron had completed the three holding frames. They lashed down the rifle and Tommy gun, hitched on the trigger tins and rigged the tankers above them. Barron had been using the pistol to fling occasional shots into the jungle. Now that everything was ready he emptied it deliberately along the downstream bank to pin down any natives close to the river. Then he reloaded and lashed it in position while Jane hauled water from the river and filled the tanker tins.

They stood side by side for a moment, watching the water dripping away. Barron found wonder growing in him that the idea of the tin cans should have been born in the mind of this girl who lived with books; that she should have found a way out for them when his years of training and experience had been able to offer nothing better than the barest chance of survival.

"Well, this is it," he said. "Let's go."

They tugged and pushed the log to the river's edge, poising it with one end out over the swirling water. Barron eyed the river quickly, watched an uprooted tree glide swiftly past, stared at the yellow-white flurry of water against the bank. That was good. The current beat back a little; enough to keep them clear of the bank, but not enough to thrust them out into the open water. It was faster than he'd thought, though.

He flicked a glance at Jane Kingdom, gave her a quick grin. "There's only one sure way of sticking to our log," he said. "We'll have to go in with it."

She looked back calmly. "I'm ready."

Then she climbed out on the log while Barron counterbalanced it. And when she had her legs and arms tightly wrapped, he inched along, gripping with arms and knees, his feet barely touching the ground. Then the log tilted, hesitated for a moment, and plunged end first into the river.

They came up gasping. After the steaming heat of the jungle the river was cold. It ran so swiftly down from the mountains that it hadn't time to acquire the lowland heat. But the coldness was forgotten as the log gathered speed and began tossing and slewing in the current.

Barron let go with his legs, allowing his body to trail and form a keel. He felt the savage force of the river then, dragging at his body, trying to tear him away from the log. But the slewing stopped. They were only a few feet out from the bank, and when he looked up he could see the jungle slipping past at a speed that sent a wild, thrilling burst of confidence through him.

He looked at Jane Kingdom, lying along the other end of the log, clinging desperately with arms and legs. Her blonde hair was plastered down and her face was dead white. He grinned at her encouragingly, then jerked his head sideways, motioning her off the log. She stared blankly for a moment, then slowly unclasped her legs and let her body slip into the stream. Barron nodded approvingly. That way she would be a smaller target if some prowling native saw them.

But after ten minutes had passed he knew they were beyond the lines of the savages, and all they needed was the scheduled firing of the guns. Everything depended on the guns—everything. Or rather, he thought, everything depended on Jane Kingdom's idea about the guns. Then the flat report of the rifle came floating down the air. Jane Kingdom flashed a smile. It lighted up her face, stripping away the tiredness and strain.

Barron felt a tide of relief sweep through him, swiftly, like a mountain freshet, washing away the vast anxiety for her that had torn at him so cruelly. They were not yet clear, he knew, but the first trick had now fallen their way. He hauled himself cautiously down the log until they were face to face.

"We'll make it now," he said vibrantly, lifting his voice over the rushing noise of the river. "We can't lose."

She tossed the hair out of her face, throwing her head back and shaking it. "I want to hear the Tommy gun. Then I'll know we're safe."

"We'll be too far downstream." Barron's lean face was almost boyish now that the worry and anxiety had gone. "This is faster than I thought. Much faster."

"Colder, too," she grimaced. "You'll have to chip me out."

Twenty or more minutes after the rifle shot, they swung through a great elbow in the river, and Barron felt a breeze on his face. It carried a tang of salt, clean and almost astringent after the mustiness of the jungle.

Then he heard Jane shouting: "The sea! Look! The sea!" Her voice was high pitched with excitement.

He jerked his head around and there was the matchless blue of the ocean. To the left, a few hundred yards from the river's mouth, their launch tugged at its anchor chain. Dazzling white. He could even see Kana, the head crew boy, moving about the deck.

The elation burst in him then, and he began to laugh aloud. Jane Kingdom started laughing, too. And they were looking into each other's eyes, losing themselves in the wonder of their new-found companionship—and something more, something deeper.

Then a huge snag bobbed up in front of them, a monster tree with roots like drowning arms reaching for the sky. Barron had no time to shout a warning before the crash. The log leaped in his arms, tearing away from his grasp. Something hit him under the chin and a black hand wiped out the daylight. Cruel fingers dug into the back of his neck and his head, pushing him down—down. It felt as though he were going clear through the sea floor and out the other side of the world. . . .

THE fingers were on his forehead when he wanted to open his eyes again. But they were gentle—infinitely gentle, and so soothing that he was reluctant to move lest they should go away. Then he heard voices—soft, murmuring voices—and he pushed back the lead-heavy lids.

The black, seamed face of Kana hovered in mid-air, almost comical with anxiety. Nearer, out of focus, there was another face. The fingers stopped their movement and he felt softness against his lips, felt arms around him and smelled a faint, ineffable sweetness.

"Darling," Jane Kingdom murmured. "Oh, darling."

Everything jumped back into focus then for Barron, everything clarified by the magic of a word and the voice that spoke the word.

"Jane," he said. "Jane, dear."

He saw Kana glide out then, grinning broadly, and he became aware that the engine was running and the launch rising to the seas. He struggled up on one elbow.

"Everything's under control," Jane said, pushing him back gently. "We're going home."

Barron lay still, looking up at her, and she was so lovely that he began to doubt what he had heard, or that he had known the touch of her lips. But a diffidence came over him, as though this were a dream that could be shattered if pushed too far. And he knew he couldn't stand that.

"The log knocked me out," he muttered.

"I grabbed you," she said simply. "I clung to the tree roots and screamed until Kana heard."

"Thanks," Barron said. He grinned up at her, feeling something of his old assurance as their talk shifted to familiar ground. "Now you know what I meant about action instead of history."

She put a hand to his forehead in mock solicitude. "I always knew what you meant," she said gravely. "It's just that I disagree. You need action and history."

"For a historian," he said gently, "you've just given a neat display of action."

She smiled, with a slow, sweet curving of her lips. There was provocation in her eyes, a deep, bubbling humour. "The water cans weren't action."

"They were good tactics," Barron said. "And tactics are action."

"Sometimes," she said. "But this time merely good history."

Barron got the feeling then of being pushed gently into a game trap, but there was nothing he could do about it. "Not the Romans," he said. "Don't tell me the Romans did it once. Or the Greeks."

Her smile deepened. "No. Later than that. The first World War." Mischief sparkled in her grey eyes. "Your own Australians tricked the Turks on Gallipoli with water cans and sand," she said. "A whole army of them got clear away."

Barron stared at her for a long moment, remembering all his big talk about action—about this land of the present and the future—remembering how he had railed against history as a dead and useless thing. Now the joke was on him and he felt strangely humble—contrite.

"D'you think you could teach me some history?" he asked softly. "With a head as thick as mine?"

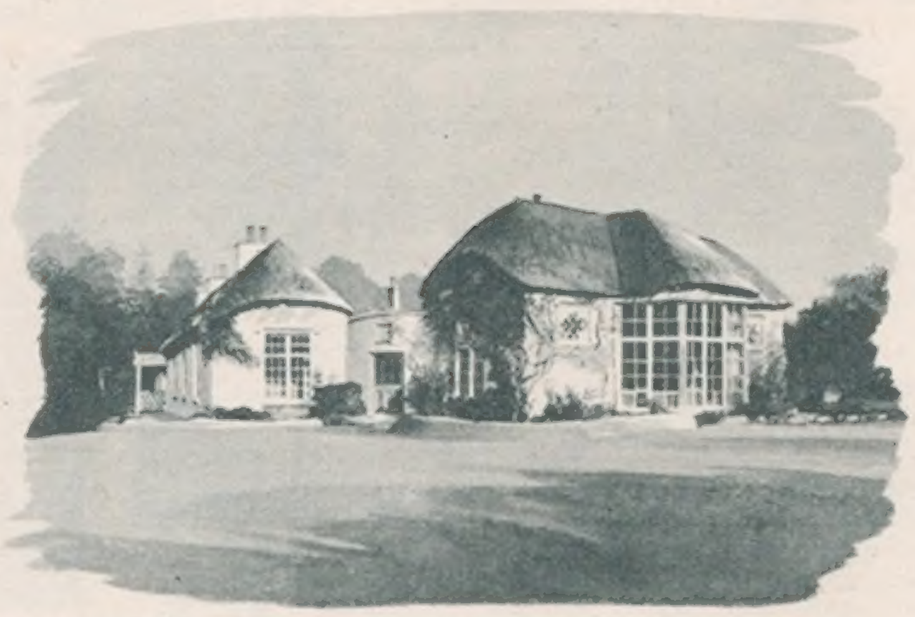
She leaned toward him, her lips parted and her eyes glowing. "Let's try," she whispered. "There'll be plenty of time."

THE END

OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER



In disgust Isaac Corry decided to sail to the West Indies—but got married instead

ONE day in 1725, Isaac Corry, a merchant who had amassed a large fortune in the West Indies, was walking wrathfully through the town of Newry.

He had sailed home to Ireland to see his sick father only to learn that he had died already and bequeathed all his property to the children of a second marriage. In disgust, Corry went to Newry intending to re-embark for the West Indies.

But as he strode through the town he saw over a garden wall "a lady to whose beauty and dignified demeanour his heart immediately became a willing captive."

He obtained an introduction, forgot about the West Indies, married the lady, settled down in Newry, and bought the property of Derrymore, in County Armagh.

Two generations later, his grandson, also named Isaac Corry, built Derrymore House, now owned by the National Trust. Corry later became Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, and it was at Derrymore, in what is now known as the Treaty Room, that the Act of Union of Ireland with Great Britain was drafted in 1800.

Corry's partner in this famous measure was his friend Lord Castlereagh, later the British Foreign Secretary.

The Irish people never forgave Corry for voting for the Union and for his friendship with the hated Castlereagh. Once his carriage was stoned as it passed through Newry on the way to Dublin. Corry's reaction was prompt and effective. He built, at public expense, a new road which enabled him to by-pass Newry on his future visits to the capital. To this day, the highway is called the Chancellor's Road.

While he was Chancellor, Corry objected to language used in the House by his friend, Henry Grattan. He demanded instant satisfaction and the two men went outside to fight a duel with pistols.

Corry was wounded in the arm, but the ball was quickly extracted and he returned to the House in time to vote on the motion that had caused the quarrel.

In the latter half of the last century Derrymore was bought by the Richardson family, who were Quakers. They built Bessbrook, the first model village in northern Ireland. It was a social experiment which captured the public imagination and John Richardson was offered a baronetcy. He declined the honour as not being in keeping with Quaker tenets.

How to get there: Derrymore House is about one and a half miles from Newry. *Open:* April to October, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Bank Holidays, 2 till 6.

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At War	Shabby
The Farmers	Thanks To The Plumber
Winter's Sword	That Misery
Shock For The Kremlin	Stubborn Old Sticker
After The Party	Alfie's A Dunce, But
A Bottle Of Medicine	Gave Me A Kick
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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated January 26), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, January 12, for early news of No. 2,070 result.)

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